

JOHN CRAIG THE SCOTTISH DOMINICAN

He thus bowed down with despondency and
[illegible] ... [illegible]

Memorials of the Dawn of the Reformation in Europe



MEMORIALS

OF THE

DAWN OF THE REFORMATION

in Europe.

"Grey dawn awakes, and light with slanting beam
Through darkness struggles on to breaking day
The gathering light contends against the gloom
That, like a menaced foeman comes all armed,
And marshalling battalions for the strife
The ineffectual Dawn's o'ermastery
Seems threatened yet the clouds with rosy hue
Assume his livery, and the shadows flee
Like Truth triumphant o'er malignant scorn."

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PREFACE

The admiration and gratitude with which those eminent men have been regarded, who stood foremost at the great crisis of the Reformation in the different kingdoms of Europe, has naturally given a pre-eminence to their actions and characters in the histories of the period, that has tended to throw into the shade those no less noble and worthy confessors who were their precursors and fellow-labourers in the same cause.

These Memorials are designed to exhibit, in a just and impartial light, the power of truth as exhibited in the records of nearly every nation of Europe. The leading narratives embody biographical sketches, gathered from rare and authentic sources, of some of the noblest precursors of Luther; while those lighter and less earnest assailants of error who have been depicted in the Pasquils of the Reformation, cannot but be regarded by every thoughtful student of history as affording remarkable evidence of the finger of God controlling the purposes of men, and working by their means the accomplishment of his own providential designs.

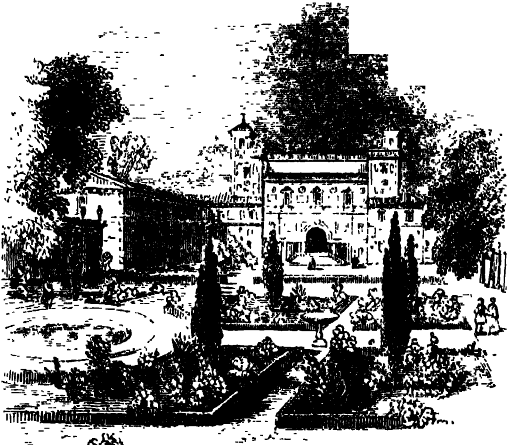
As a tribute to the memory of those great and good men who stood foremost for the Truth in dark and perilous times, and as a contribution to popular literature, worthy, in subject at least, of being studied by those who venerate the noble champions of our Christian liberty, these narratives are offered to the people of England as Memorials of the Dawn of the Reformation in Europe.

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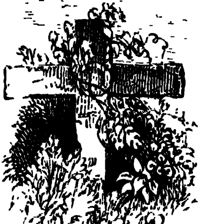
GIROLAMO SAVONAROLA,

THE

ITALIAN REFORMER.



Palace of Lorenzo de Medici, Florence



THIRTY-FOUR years after the Church of Rome had committed the ashes of John Huss to the waters of the Rhine, in the vain hope of quenching the spirit of truth which spoke through him, there was born at Ferrara one whom Providence designed to carry on his work, and to share his fate. Girolamo Maria Francesco Mattheo, born on the 21st of September 1452, was the son of Nicolo Savonarola, the descendant of a noble house of Padua. His mother, Helen, was of an ancient family of Mantua. Previous to the birth of Girolamo, the family

had resided at Bologna, whence they removed to Ferrara, in consequence of the grandfather, Michele, a celebrated physician, having been invited thither by the Duke of Ferrara.

The young Savonarola had fallen on eventful times. The darkness of the middle ages was passing away before that great revival of learning and of art which renders this period of European history so memorable. It had already made considerable advances in Italy, and now many influences were at work to hasten its progress. Great men emulated each other in the munificence of the rewards which they bestowed on the scholar and the artist, and in the eagerness with which they accumulated the models of both—the works of learning and of art of former times. The classics of ancient Greece and Rome were searched for as hid treasure, and prized above the costliest gems. The human mind had awakened from its long dull sleep, and was pursuing the new path opened up to it, with marvellous energy and delight. About this time fresh impulse was given to intellectual pursuits, by the establishment at Florence of an institution for the study of the Platonic philosophy, "the first institution in Europe for the pursuit of science, detached from the scholastic method then universally adopted."

In his grandfather, to whose care Girolamo's education was intrusted, the boy found a tutor worthy of his times. Michele had early imbibed an enthusiastic devotion to letters, which led him to exchange the profession of a soldier for that of a physician. He had studied at the most celebrated seats of learning, and had become distinguished, not only in his own profession, but likewise for his general attainments. And now he set himself with affectionate zeal to the tuition of his grandson; whom he found singularly capable and disposed to profit by his instructions. The character of the child was strongly marked. Thoughtful, grave. and with a highly poetic

temperament, he already stood apart from his fellows. The old man, encouraged by the precocity of his pupil's mind, extended the boy's studies far beyond those suitable to his age, and, while yet a mere child, initiated him into his own favourite physiological pursuits. Such training prematurely developed the thoughtful enthusiasm of the youth's character, and scarcely left him a boyhood. Hence in tracing the history of his life, we can mark no season of mirthful enjoyment, but are at once introduced to a mind struggling for a solution of the mysteries by which it was surrounded, thirsting for truth, and indulging all a poet's yearnings for an ideal state of perfection.

Michele died when Girolamo had reached his tenth year, and the care of the boy's education was transferred to his father, who himself became his instructor in logic and philosophy, and placed him under able teachers of classical learning. With these he soon gave evidence of the inquiring and independent spirit of which he was possessed. When his views differed from those of his teachers, he would boldly argue for and maintain his own. His advances in knowledge were rapid, and at an early period he began to study the works of Plato and Aristotle. The elevated system of the former, so congenial to his own unworldly aspirations, attracted his admiration, and he addicted himself to the study of the great philosopher with enthusiasm. These grave pursuits were lightened by the cultivation of his poetic powers, and his loving perusal of the works of Dante and Petrarch, those great masters of Italian song.

Nicolo Savonarola had chosen the profession of a physician for his son, and great hopes were entertained of the future eminence of one who had so early given indications of genius. The path marked out for him was one which in those days gave ample scope for the exercise of various intellectual gifts; and it is probable that in the selection of it the wishes of the son coincided with those of the father.

But soon the youth was led to question, whether in becoming a votary of literature, and an aspirant for earthly honour, he was indeed exercising his highest powers and pursuing the chief good. His mind had early received a religious bias. While yet very young, the canonization of Catharine of Sienna took place; an event which created much excitement in its own and after times, and must have deeply impressed the susceptible mind of Girolamo. These impressions were strengthened by the objects and associations which surrounded him; by the poetry to which his most delightful hours were devoted; and by the works of art which gratified the taste, and excited the devotion of the people. And now was the hour of peril to Savonarola's soul. Italy—dead to all true spiritual life, dead even to the perception of what Christian morality required, and groaning beneath a general dissoluteness, and the prevalence of appalling crimes, which would have disgraced nations whose deities were the patrons of vice—was full of that kind of religion to which so many influences were drawing Savonarola. It is interesting, but saddening, to observe how readily this religion of the imagination and the senses entered into combination with every variety of character, producing effects different according to the peculiar temperament on which it acted, but transforming none, while it deluded all. Here it led a votary to resign all secular pursuits, and withdraw from the ordinary society of the world; and there it left another to carry on a life of folly, of cruelty, and of crime, in the intervals of which, nay, in the very midst of which, he might be seen, subdued in absorbing adoration, at the shrine of some favourite saint. This is the religion of poetry, of sentiment, the time-hallowed and picturesque faith of which we hear so often, and which finds so much favour in the eyes of many. Strange how soon the plainest lessons of the world's experience, the most valuable lessons of history, are forgotten! Yet these lessons cannot be blotted

out; and there are those who will not forget, that, coexistent with this religion, where most fully developed and universally diffused, the moral condition of the people was unspeakably corrupt; and the leaders in corruption, the most atrocious transgressors, were the rulers of the church, the members of that splendid hierarchy, the power, and pomp, and glory of which served but to set their crimes in bolder relief.

Girolamo's religious feelings deepened, and he wished to become a monk. He had necessarily imbibed many of the mistaken notions of his times as to the virtues and benefits of a monastic life; but his convictions were of a very different character from those which led so many to the cloister. Already had the spirit of truth commenced the work of enlightenment, already had she opened the eyes of the youth to his own inherent sinfulness, to the holiness of God and of the worship which he required, and to the only ground of hope—the work of the Redeemer. The society of his father's house, the society of the world in general, he felt to be totally opposed to the new life within him; and, fearful of the temptations which pressed on every side, he longed for the safety which the retreat of a convent seemed to offer.

There was, however, a difficulty in the way. Savonarola's father and friends were not likely thus to forget the high hopes they cherished regarding him. He was an affectionate son, and the struggle in his mind between his wishes to gratify his friends, and what seemed to be his duty to a higher being, was protracted and painful. But the religious obligation, which, in so many ways of danger and self-denial, he afterwards proved to be ever the supreme influence, prevailed; and in April 1475, during the celebration of the festival of St. George, the patron saint of Ferrara, he secretly left his father's house, and repaired to Bologna, where he was at once received into the monastery of the Dominicans, as a candidate for the vows. The

next day he wrote a letter to his father, detailing his reasons for the step he had taken, and referring in touching terms to the anguish he endured in abandoning his home, and separating himself from the friends he loved so well.

Like most men who, with similar feelings and hopes, have embraced a monastic life, Savonarola was disappointed. The spiritual converse, the absorbing devotion, the holiness which he expected to find in his brethren, he looked for in vain. Every evil passion seemed to have acquired fresh power by its professed renunciation. He had sought to strengthen his weak spirit by the hallowed influences of Christian fellowship; and despairing of finding it in the open common of the general church, he looked to the cloister as the church within the church, the sacred enclosure, where the fruits of righteousness might spring up and ripen. But alas! here too the plague spot was found, and the heavenward spirit of the young brother was thrown back on itself and on its God.

For a considerable time Girolamo remained a lay brother, and was employed in teaching the philosophy of Aristotle, an occupation very different from what he desired. Plato had long before displaced Aristotle in his esteem; and afterwards, when his attention was turned to theology, Thomas Aquinas became the favourite. He too, happily for Savonarola, had soon to yield the chief place, which was now accorded to the only infallible guide. Savonarola became acquainted with the Scriptures, and humbly submitted his soul to their authoritative teaching. "At length," says his English biographer, "his books ceased to charm, his soul ceased to affect the food presented by the current religious treatises. Nothing would satisfy him but the sacred Scriptures themselves; there he wished to lay sure the foundations of his belief and practice. Henceforth, to study them, to obey them, to solve whatever difficulties might be contained in them, and to apply the results to his conscience, became the chief occupation of his exis-

tence. He held them in the highest honour, treated them with enthusiastic reverence, and was forward to acknowledge that his gratitude was due to them for all his light, his consolation, and better tendencies."

To teach the scholastic philosophy was an occupation little agreeable to such tastes. Yet Girolamo was slow to rid himself of it by entering on the priest's office. On various accounts he hesitated. The vile character of the ministers of the Romish Church made him shrink from close association with them. "If you wish your son to be a wicked man," he used to say, "make him a priest." And besides, there was much that was conflicting in his opinions on ecclesiastical matters, which probably rendered him the more averse to take a decided step. As is a'ways the case with a mind struggling from darkness to light, his notions were somewhat contradictory. Old fallacies lurked in his mind and coloured its perceptions, even after its reception of principles which, if seen in all their bearings, would have expelled these fallacies. This is what the history of the progress of the human mind teaches us to expect. One man explodes this prejudice, another discovers the error of that opinion, and thus by the combined efforts of honest but imperfect inquirers, we arrive at a well-defined and consistent system of truth. We know, indeed, that God could at once dispel every shade of error from the minds of those whom he purposed to make the instruments of re-introducing to the world the true knowledge of himself and of his institutions: but we know likewise that this is not the plan of his sovereign wisdom. By slow and painful degrees we find the reformers led on, always holding firm the great central point of the gospel, but in other things often straying under the inveterate power of old superstitions.

Such was Savonarola, when, after a novitiate of seven years, he received priestly ordination. He had already

learned that the true "Catholic Church consists of those Christians who live good lives and have the grace of God." He perceived, too, that the church as it was had departed from primitive simplicity, had introduced ceremonies unauthorized by the word of God, and had substituted obedience to these ritual observances for obedience to the commands of Christ. Notwithstanding, he still regarded the Church of Rome as the true church of God, possessed of high mysterious privileges and mighty powers. His views of the priestly office were in like manner characterized by the same mixture of truth and error. He retained many of the Romish notions in regard to the functions of the priesthood, but as to what constituted validity, he was entirely at issue with his times. Without personal holiness, he boldly declared no man could be a true priest; no ordination, no outward rite could make him so. Ceremonial or official holiness he utterly refused to recognise, and insisted that without that fitness for the office which personal piety could alone bestow, no man had a valid title to it, or could really discharge its functions.

CHAPTER II.

STATE OF THE CHURCH.

To a man holding these opinions, the Church of Rome could be no sanctuary of peace. The chief shepherd was Sixtus IV., who but a few years before had added to the catalogue of his crimes one of the darkest which the blood-stained annals of these times record. Lorenzo de Medici was at the head of the republic of Florence. To get rid of him and of his brother the Cardinal Giuliano suited the interests, or would gratify the malice, of the pope and some of his allies, and a scheme of assassination

was laid:—"a transaction," says Roscoe in his Life of Lorenzo de Medici, "that has seldom been mentioned without emotions of the strongest horror and detestation, and which, as has justly been observed, is an incontrovertible proof of the practical atheism of the times in which it took place—a transaction in which a pope, a cardinal, an archbishop, and several other ecclesiastics, associated themselves with a band of ruffians, to destroy two men who were an honour to their age and country; and purposed to perpetrate their crime at a season of hospitality, in the sanctuary of a Christian church, and at the very moment of the elevation of the Host, when the audience bowed down before it, and the assassins were presumed to be in the immediate presence of their God." In the church of the Reparata at Florence, on Sunday the 26th of April 1478, the scheme was executed, and Giuliano de Medici killed. Lorenzo escaped, and the conspirators were arrested, sentenced to death, and executed by the indignant inhabitants. Immediately the thunders of the church were awakened; not against the miscreant who had brought so foul a blot on its name, but against the unoffending people who had dared to bring the murderers to justice. Sixtus, enraged at the failure of his plot, sought revenge by anathematizing Lorenzo de Medici and the magistrates of the republic of Florence; styling Lorenzo, in his official document, "the child of iniquity and the nursling of perdition."

The bishops and clergy in the Florentine dominions were suspended from the exercise of their spiritual functions, but as they were not personally implicated in the imputed guilt, they declared that the pope had exceeded his authority. and they retorted his anathemas on himself. Sixtus, however, had temporal as well as spiritual weapons at command, and the Florentines sought to avert his wrath by concession and humiliation. But vain were all their entreaties and the mediation of foreign princes;

the anger of the pontiff could be appeased by nothing short of the surrender or banishment of Lorenzo, and the Florentines were determined to brave the worst rather than obtain peace on such terms. War was commenced, but while the result was still doubtful, Mahomet II. made his appearance in Italy, and the belligerents were compelled to cease hostilities against each other, and defend their walls from the attacks of the infidel.

In 1484, about two years after Savonarola became a priest, Sixtus died, and was succeeded by Innocent VIII., "who had actually purchased the votes of the conclave, in order to his election, and had no sooner attained it, than he violated all treaties and oaths made with, and sworn to, the cardinals, though he had bound himself on pain of anathema, not to exercise his power of self-absolution." As was the head, so were the members. Cardinals, bishops, priests, and people, were but too generally characterized by the same shameless disregard of the obligations of common morality. Exceptions there were indeed: amongst the unknown crowd, we may hope many; and some conspicuous names we find untarnished by imputations of treachery and crime. And doubtless here and there were to be found individuals of genuine Christian character, who, apprehending the enormity of the prevailing corruption, mourned over it with bitter sorrow. These were the true antagonists of crime and vice; these alone were in possession of principles powerful enough to renovate society. Of this class we may take Girolamo as the representative.

Not ministers of Christ, but apostates, Savonarola often declared those men to be with whom he now ranked as a priest of the Church of Rome. He had enrolled himself amongst them, but with no feeling of brotherhood, no intention of submission; rather with a determination to ceaseless antagonism, with the resolution of a reformer and the courage of a martyr.

For some time he confined himself to the mere private duties of his office; reproving the careless, directing the perplexed, and consoling the penitent, with so much wisdom and zeal, that his fame spread, and many resorted to the confessional of this holy father. The honour attained by brother Girolamo was reflected on his order, and hence, that it might be increased, they were anxious he should commence public preaching. Nor was he disinclined to the work himself. He therefore readily acceded to the request of the prior of San Marco at Florence, (where Savonarola and his brethren were in the meantime sojourning,) to preach the fast-day sermons in the Lent of 1483—the year of Luther's birth.

An interesting account is given of this first attempt, by Girolamo's English biographer:—"The opportunity," he says, "long looked for has at length arrived. That fountain of eloquence in the soul of Savonarola, whose living streams had flowed at the lecture-table healingly, and which had refreshed the hearts of companions and of those who came for counsel or confession in private converse, was now to be lifted up in the congregation of believers, and the preacher was to be acknowledged as the orator of salvation, the advocate for God and man. This, and no less a gift than this, was in Savonarola—assurance of it had been felt by him—the ambition for its exercise had grown with him; and now the time has come when it is to do the work for which it had been bestowed."

With hopes thus high, Savonarola ascends the pulpit in the church of Lorenzo, at Florence. The congregation is numerous, for hitherto the preachers have been sufficiently attractive, and the new preacher has much celebrity, and from him much is expected. But these hopes and expectations are premature. Savonarola has much to learn before he is perfect as an orator. A constrained carriage, an ungainly figure, a piping voice, have

little to please an audience. Day after day the number of hearers diminishes—day after day—till at length only twenty-five are left, including women and boys. Nor is Savonarola not aware of the cause, but has left his self-condemnation on record. "I had," he says, "neither voice, lungs, nor style. My preaching disgusted every one. I could not have moved so much as a chicken!"

This was sufficiently discouraging; but Savonarola was hopeful and energetic. He felt conscious of the possession of gifts which might and ought to benefit the world, and he would not let his Master's talents be useless for want of persevering cultivation. Hitherto he had devoted his attention exclusively to the truths to be taught, now he sees the necessity of attending to the manner of teaching; and, like the great Grecian orator, he determined to spare no effort to attain the power of giving fit and proper expression to the eloquent thoughts which burned within.

After having spent about two years in these efforts in studying the Scriptures, and in instructing the young, Girolamo was invited to preach at Brescia, and repaired thither to try once more his fitness for the office of a public speaker. And now his success was as marked as was his former failure. He had learned how to convey his own soaring thoughts to others; they were unchained, and, flowing from the lips of the impassioned orator, thrilled and subdued the hearts of the people. If he be indeed the arrogant and ambitious monk they represent him, here is a fit opportunity for forwarding his designs. How does he improve it? By entering at once on a course fatal to all hopes of earthly advancement; a course which he steadily and consistently pursued, with its probable termination full in view, unterrified by the darkness which surrounded that termination, and unseduced by the bright prospects which a different path presented.

While yet a lay brother in the Dominican convent, Savonarola had declared his deep dissatisfaction with the

present state of the church. The years which succeeded had strengthened his convictions in regard to its evils, and now that he has the tongue of the eloquent, he sets himself boldly to denounce its corruptions and the sins of its ministers. In one of his discourses at Brescia, after showing from Old Testament history that the providence of God, although patient and long suffering, will not ultimately leave the impenitent unpunished, he goes on to say: "Not otherwise will it be in our corrupt times, from which all the virtues have vanished, and in which all the vices are rampant. Those sunk in sin will be invited to conversion, and mercy will be offered if they turn to virtue, but justice will be at length executed on them, if they persist and persevere in vice. The popes have attained, through the most shameful simony and subtlety, the highest priestly dignities, and even then, when seated in the holy chair, surrender themselves to a shamefully voluptuous life and an insatiable avarice. The cardinals and bishops follow their example. No discipline, no fear of God is in them. Many believe in no God."

From this time we do not hear much of Savonarola, till about 1487, when we find him at Reggio, attending a provincial chapter of the Dominicans of Lombardy. On this occasion Prince Giovanni Pico of Mirandula was present; a man of whom his learned contemporary Politiano writes: "Of a perspicacious mind, a wonderful memory, indefatigable in study, distinct and eloquent in speech, it seemed doubtful whether he was more conspicuous for his talents or his virtues. Intimately conversant with every department of philosophy, improved and invigorated by the knowledge of various languages, and of every honourable science, it may be truly said that no commendation is equal to his praise." Savonarola's talents attracted the notice of this great man, who wrote to his friend Lorenzo de Medici, advising him to secure to Florence the labours of the learned and eloquent monk.

Thus was Girolamo invited to return to Florence, destined thenceforward to be the scene of his labours and of his sufferings.

CHAPTER III.

FLORENCE.

FLORENCE was apparently in the height of its prosperity when Savonarola made it his home. Under its republican government had arisen a people distinguished by their activity and industry, by the success of their commerce, and by their attainments in literature and art; a people whose superiority was universally acknowledged, and who became "the historians, the poets, the orators, and the preceptors of Europe." Yet, with all these advantages, the Florentines were less favourably characterized by a tendency to intestine dissensions, to sudden revolutions and violent struggles for power. At the period of which we now write, however, the undisputed influence of Lorenzo the Magnificent, the most eminent of the distinguished line of the Medici, served to repress the love of change of the fickle populace, and the city enjoyed peace.

The family of the Medici had long been influential in Florence, and about the close of the preceding century, its power was much increased by Giovanni, the great-grandfather of Lorenzo. Giovanni had by commerce acquired immense wealth, and by his virtues had gained the esteem of his fellow-citizens, by whom he was raised to the highest offices of the republic. He died in 1428, leaving two sons, Cosmo and Lorenzo, from the latter of whom "is derived the collateral branch, which, in the beginning of the sixteenth century, obtained the absolute sovereignty of Tuscany."

The eldest son, Cosmo, succeeded to his father's influence in the republic, and inherited his father's moderation and liberality. His great wealth enabled him to support the family dignity, and entertain illustrious foreigners with a splendour and magnificence which, in the eyes of his fellow-citizens, reflected honour on their country; and above all it enabled him to extend the most liberal patronage to learning and to art. This was indeed his great delight; and not only Florence and Italy, but all Europe, owe much to the enlightened zeal which he displayed in the promotion of learning. It was he who founded the institution for the study of the Platonic philosophy, to which we have already referred. Over this institution he placed the son of his favourite physician, who by his desire was specially educated for the purpose. He was likewise the great patron and protector of those Greeks, by whose means the language and literature of their country came to be generally studied in Italy; and he was foremost amongst the princely collectors of ancient books. In consequence of his extended commercial relations, he had correspondents in every country, and they, as well as his learned friends whom he frequently sent on pilgrimages in search of manuscripts, were enjoined to procure for him these literary treasures at any cost. The works thus obtained laid the foundation of a celebrated library in Florence, now known by the name of the "Bibliotheca Medico-Lamentiana." Nor was Cosmo less ardent in the encouragement of art. To the great Florentine citizen the most distinguished sculptors and painters of the day were proud to own their obligations.

In the exercise of his state functions, Cosmo exhibited rare wisdom and moderation. The kind of power which he wielded is thus described by Roscoe: "The authority which Cosmo and his descendants exercised in Florence during the fifteenth century, was of a very peculiar nature; and consisted rather in a tacit influence on their part, and

a voluntary acquiescence on that of the people, than in any prescribed or definite compact between them. The form of government was ostensibly a republic, and was directed by a council of ten citizens, and a chief executive officer, called the Gonfaloniere, or standard-bearer, who was chosen every two months. Under this establishment the citizens imagined they enjoyed the full exercise of their liberties; but such was the power of the Medici, that they generally either assumed to themselves the first offices of the state, or nominated such persons as they thought proper to those employments. In this, however, they paid great respect to popular opinion. That opposition of interests so generally apparent between the people and their rulers, was at this time scarcely perceived at Florence, where superior qualifications and industry were the surest recommendations to public authority and favour. Convinced of the benefits constantly received from this family, and satisfied that they could at any time withdraw themselves from a connexion that exacted no engagements, and required only a temporary acquiescence, the Florentines considered the Medici as the fathers, and not as the rulers, of the republic. On the other hand, the chiefs of this house, by appearing rather to decline than court the honours bestowed on them, and by a singular moderation in the use of them when obtained, were careful to maintain the character of simple citizens of Florence, and servants of the state. An interchange of reciprocal good offices was the only tie by which the Florentines and the Medici were bound, and perhaps the long continuance of this connexion may be attributed to the very circumstance of its having been in the power of either of the parties, at any time, to dissolve it."

Cosmo died in 1464, and was succeeded by his son Piero, who, weak in body, and inferior in abilities and prudence to his father, failed to sustain the family popularity, although he continued to retain the family authority. He

died in 1469, leaving two sons, Lorenzo and Giuliano.

Lorenzo was twenty-one years of age at the time of his father's death, and had already given proofs of extraordinary capacity and vigour. This early promise his future course amply redeemed, and Lorenzo de Medici, with the title simply of a citizen of Florence, obtained, by means of his talents, his justice, and magnanimity, an honourable pre-eminence amongst the princes of Europe.

Lorenzo inherited the family partiality for men of letters, and was himself highly distinguished for his literary attainments. Hence, with singular judgment and taste, he extended the encouragement which the Medici had ever given to talent. The libraries founded by his grandfather were enlarged by him; and an academy opened for the study of the antique in art, which he enriched with the choicest specimens of ancient sculpture. He might almost be said to be the centre of the intelligence and refinement of his age. Florence was the great resort of men of genius, who were certain of finding there the honour due to them; and it was the chief pleasure of its ruler to turn from his harassing public cares, to the society of those men, and, as an equal, join in their intellectual converse.

Such was the man by whom Savonarola was invited to Florence, and created prior of San Marco. Are we to expect sympathy of feeling between the stern preacher and his accomplished patron? Girolamo was no ignorant bigot, fearful of the spread of information. A bold independent thinker himself, he wished to make others so likewise. But Girolamo was more than a man of letters, or a man of taste; in him these endowments were merged in the grand distinction of a Christian man. His position was a difficult one, a testing one, to the integrity and supremacy of what is peculiar in his religious principles.

"Savonarola," says the writer of his life and times, "is in the monastery of San Marco, bound, as it would seem, by such associations, both to the Medici and the papacy, as

it would be difficult to undervalue. Nor was he himself unattended with celebrity. To his lectures crowded hearers of all ranks; even men like Pico della Mirandola, Girolamo and Domenico Benivieni, and others of like note, were among them. What wonder to them who had heard him in his first preaching in the church of Lorenzo what a difference betwixt then and now! Then the ineffective preacher, now the omnipotent orator. Anon the numerous audience so much increased, that the narrow hall was insufficient to contain them, and the interior of the cloister was needs called into requisition. At length the more influential of the citizens obtained permission to hear the lectures in the church itself.

Lorenzo could not fail of being proud of such a protege. Already, induced by the serious disposition which formed part of his character, the magnanimous Medici had favoured many learned ecclesiastics. Moral and religious themes were frequently the subject of his daily talk. He had already eminently distinguished one Mariano de Genargano, an Augustine monk, and superior of his order, for whose use and that of his associates, Lorenzo had erected in the suburbs of Florence an extensive building, and endowed it as a monastery. Thither, indeed, he was himself often wont to seek temporary refuge, with a few select friends, from the busy world, and enjoy the conversation of the learned ecclesiastic. Nor are we left altogether ignorant of the arguments discussed in the convent of San Gallo, being informed by Valori, that the existence and attributes of Deity, the insufficiency of temporal enjoyments to fill the mind, and the probability and moral necessity of a future state, were the most customary topics of discourse. Lorenzo had evidently expected an addition to these refined pleasures in the company of Savonarola; but he was destined to be taught a different experience in the convent of San Marco, from what he had learned in that of San Gallo.

The frame of mind in which Savonarola assumed his new duties at San Marco, was altogether alien to the then spiritual and political condition of men and manners in Florence. Whatever external glitter might belong to the state of the republic, he saw at a glance that it had become a mere fulcrum for supporting the power and consideration of a single family. Whatever the seeming or even real generosity of Lorenzo, the policy of the Medici was necessarily selfish. That the power of the monied aristocracy also had been thereby effectually subverted, could not be hidden from a clear-sighted observer. But the honest mind must have been most troubled by the fact that, from the overbalance of the mere sensuous life, even when refined rather than purified by literature, the legitimate influence of the Christian religion was all but suppressed. There was, besides, no man bold enough to chastise with eloquent reproof the follies and vices of the age. The most celebrated preachers of the time were moral preachers, so called, who studiously concealed the deep and grievous evil of sin from the people, and based the divine blessing on the performance of particular merits and self-elected duties. Men admired their masterly disposition, the logical clearness and soundness with which they treated their argument,—qualities surely subordinate in importance, where first the demonstration of the spirit with power is requisite—and went away cold and unmoved from their preaching. Savonarola, therefore, had to fight a double battle, not only against the times generally, but also against the prevailing and most approved style of preaching, both of them naturally assisting the other in opposition to his efforts. How far he comprehended his times, how keenly he penetrated their inmost poverty and lifelessness, but slightly covered to outward observance, his writings sufficiently show. His prophetic voice, without reserve, laid this bare to the minds of all, nay, necessarily became more decided and severe as he beheld sin disguised in the

mask of piety, and the mass of half and nominal Christians regarding every demand to submit themselves unconditionally to the truth, as a dangerous fanaticism—even a trespass against humanity. It is thus that Savonarola writes concerning the character of the time, the people, and their leaders, by which we may more clearly see how he came by degrees into a mis-relation with the most noble representative of the time, Lorenzo de Medici. How painful was this to Savonarola, from the high esteem in which he ingenuously held Lorenzo's talents and elevated aims!"

Girolamo was a republican. Florence was now his adopted country, and the Medicean influence he regarded as subversive of its liberties. Henceforward he becomes a state as well as a church reformer. But it was chiefly because he believed the present political condition of Florence, and the tastes of its ruler and people, presented obstacles to the revival of true religion, that he interfered in its secular affairs. All the benefits which mere mental cultivation, which philosophy and art could bestow, the Florentines enjoyed. Yet the people were vain, frivolous, and immoral. Many of the learned men were grossly vicious; and the life led by all, not excepting even Lorenzo, was not only in opposition to the Christian spirit, but also in direct outward violation of many precepts of Christian morality.

Not less against this polite and refined irreligion, against this system in which "Christ was less esteemed than Plato," than against the corruptions of the Romish Church, did the prior of San Marco declare war. To Lorenzo, whom he regarded as the prime sustainer of the current tastes, and as the infringer of his country's liberties, he early manifested a coldness which soon grew into decided opposition. It was customary for the prior of San Marco, on being installed, to pay a visit to the Medici, and commend his convent to his protection. This visit Savonarola refused to pay: he would acknowledge no authority but

that of God. The monks remonstrated. "Who raised me to this dignity," asked Savonarola, "Lorenzo, or God? Let us render thanks to God, to whom they are due, and not to a mortal man." Lorenzo, instead of resenting this neglect, sought the more earnestly to make a friend of the austere monk. He saw that the Florentines needed to be reformed, and he hoped, perhaps, that the zealous preacher should be the means of it. He might, too, have been influenced by motives of policy. Savonarola was popular with the people, and it would be well to attach him to the interests of his family. But whatever were the designs of Lorenzo, in seeking the friendship of Savonarola, it is to his credit that after he failed, he continued as before to commend the preacher's efforts for the moral improvement of the people, and endured with much patience his animadversions on his own conduct.

Savonarola loved to lecture on the Apocalypse, and ere long he made it the subject of his discourses in Florence. The first of these is thus described. "It was, according to his own account, on the 1st of August 1489, that Savonarola began in the garden of the cloister at San Marco, under a shrubbery of Damascus roses, to expound to a numerous audience his favourite book—the book so dear to the poetico-religious enthusiast—the Apocalypse of St. John the Divine. The throng of people was so great, that there was scarcely room for the monks themselves, many of whom stood on the choir wall, and it was difficult to find one who would do the customary duty at the door or in the sacristy. It was not the first time, as we know, that Savonarola had undertaken the interpretation of this very prophecy, in order to denounce the moral degeneracy of his times, with the threatenings of divine anger. Now again, he is heard discussing and enforcing the necessity of an earnest reformation in the collective church, and in individual life. Three points he contends for—that the Church of God must be renewed, and that

in his time—that all Italy should be first heavily visited—and that the punishment would soon arrive."

Girolamo frequently declared that Italy above all other lands had sinned, and that therefore a scourge awaited it, which could only be averted by repentance and reformation. His preaching, however, was not confined to such themes as these. The only way of a sinner's justification in the sight of God, he delighted to proclaim. "None," he cries, "can glory in themselves; and if, in the presence of God, the question were put to all the righteous, 'Have you been saved by your own strength?' they would all with one voice exclaim, 'Not unto us, O Lord, but unto thy name be the glory.' Wherefore, O God, I seek thy mercy, and I bring thee not my own righteousness; the moment thou justifiest me by grace, thy righteousness belongs to me; for grace is the righteousness of God. So long, O man, as thou believest not, thou art, because of sin, deprived of grace. O God, save me by thy righteousness, that is, by thy Son, who alone was found righteous among men." He dwelt largely, likewise, on the soul-purifying effects of the faith of the Gospel, and on the utter worthlessness of all mere external worship in the sight of the heart-searching God. And not the least marked of the peculiarities of his preaching was his constant appeal to the Scriptures. Not, "What saith the Church?" was his cry, but, "What saith the Lord?" "People of Florence," he exclaims, "give yourselves to the study of the sacred Scriptures! The first blessing is, understand, the sacred Scriptures. Let us publicly confess the truth, the sacred Scriptures have been locked up—this light has been almost extinguished among men! Has it not been set aside, left in the dust?"

These doctrines were new to Florence, and wonderful, likewise, was the manner of their expounder. His sermons, we are told, were not elaborated, or composed with logical precision, but were characterized by an impassioned,

energetic, sweeping eloquence which often excited a general burst of weeping amongst the crowd, and moved even the cold philosophic men of learning who listened to it. "At the conclusion he would frequently descend from the pulpit, bathed in tears, amid the sobs and groans of the congregation."

At home and abroad the Prior's labours were unremitting. He restricted himself to four hours of rest, which, notwithstanding his constant preaching, left him time to attend to the progress of the brethren under his charge, whom he visited from cell to cell, to hold spiritual conversation with them. He was also much resorted to by the citizens, who considered Father Girolamo the most holy, faithful, and skilful of spiritual directors.

While Savonarola was thus occupied, an event occurred of deep importance to Florence. Lorenzo de Medici was seized with mortal illness. Feeling that his end was near, he sent for the "true monk," as he called Girolamo, who immediately repaired to him. "Taking this opportunity of exhorting Lorenzo to consider himself as if he were then upon his death-bed, Savonarola, having commended him to the Divine mercy, and comforted him in the name of the Holy Trinity, proceeded to assure the sufferer, that if he had a strong and living faith, God would and could forgive him. Lorenzo replied that he had this faith; whereupon Savonarola added, that it was also required of him that he should restore whatever he might have unjustly obtained, or should direct his sons to do so. This also Lorenzo promised. But when Savonarola proceeded to demand from him that he should reinstate Florence in authority and right of the old republican freedom, Lorenzo maintained a stubborn silence. Savonarola instantly left him; it is even said, without giving him absolution." Such is the relation of this interview given in the "Life and Times of Savonarola," on the authority of one of his earliest Italian biographers, Prince Pico della Mirandola,

the nephew of the famous Pico, who introduced Girolamo to Lorenzo. The account of Politiano, the friend of Lorenzo, differs in some particulars. He says the visit was volunteered by Savonarola, makes no mention of any reference to the government of Florence, and affirms that on Savonarola's quitting the room, Lorenzo, to show that he cherished no resentment against him, called him back, and requested that he would give him his benediction, which the Prior immediately did, Lorenzo making the usual responses.

Lorenzo left a numerous family, three of whom were sons. Piero, Giovanni, and Giuliano. Giovanni, through his father's influence with Innocent VIII., was created a cardinal when only thirteen years of age, and afterwards, under the name of Leo X., wore the papal crown at the memorable era of the Reformation.

CHAPTER IV.

SAVONAROLA A POLITICIAN.

After the death of the great Medici, Savonarola took a more prominent part in the political affairs of Florence. He was already at the head of a party called Frateschi (brethren,) or Piagone (mourners.) "These were the zealous advocates of liberty, who had not only united for the restoration of the republic, but went about constantly and loudly lamenting the corruption of morals and the decay of prosperity in the city. To counteract the vice and the ruin that prevailed, they proposed the severest discipline. They were considerable in numbers, character, and talent." There were besides two other factions in the city—the Compagnacci, so named "from the assistance they derived from companies of young

nobles, who enlisted themselves in its service;" and the Mediccan party, called the Bigi (grey.) The Medicean influence was still strong, and might have crushed the rising discontents, had it been exercised prudently and firmly. But Piero de Medici was rash and vacillating. He was, moreover, undisguisedly ambitious, and quickly disgusted the jealous Florentines by imprudent attempts to possess himself of sovereign power. About this time, Charles VIII. of France appeared in Italy at the head of his troops, and spread dismay through the Italian states. Piero with foolish temerity threw himself into his camp, and failing to avert the threatened dangers by entreaties, he weakly made important concessions in regard to some of the Florentine possessions. This exasperated the people so much, that on his return to the city he was refused admittance to the palace of the magistrates; whereupon, alarmed for his personal safety, he fled to Venice. The plunder of the palace of the Medici soon followed, and tumult spread through the city, which Savonarola used all his influence to quell, and succeeded in saving many of the friends of the Medici, who but for his interference would probably have fallen victims to the rage of the populace.

Savonarola had conceived the idea that the reformation of Italy was to be effected by foreign interference, and in Charles VIII. he thought he recognised the divinely appointed instrument of this work. Having been appointed by the Florentines one of five orators to petition Charles for the restoration of Pisa, he had soon an opportunity of declaring his convictions to the monarch himself, whom he admonished in the most solemn manner regarding the high mission laid upon him, and the guilt of neglecting to fulfil it. With characteristic fearlessness, he, at the same time, condemned the robberies and massacres of which the French troops were guilty, and threatened the conqueror with the vengeance of heaven if he did

not restrain these excesses. Erelong the single-hearted monk had reason to doubt the correctness of the opinion he had formed of the mission of the crafty and ambitious monarch. Charles came to Florence, and there conducted himself in a manner highly offensive to the people. Savonarola again sought his presence, and addressed to him such words of sharp reproof as seldom meet royal ears. Charles does not seem to have resented the prior's boldness; nor did Savonarola, although grieved and disappointed, altogether renounce his friendship.

Florence was shortly freed from the presence of the French troops, and the influence of the Prior of San Marco, which had been increased by the wisdom of his dealings with Charles, became paramount. The settlement of the government was the first thing to be attended to. On the expulsion of the Medici, "twenty citizens were chosen by the appellation of Accopiatori, who were invested not only with the power of raising money, but also of electing the chief magistrates." This was not sufficiently popular to meet the views of Savonarola, and in a short time "the newly-elected magistrates voluntarily abdicated their offices, and an effort was made to establish the government on a more popular basis, by vesting the legislative power of the state in the Consiglio Maggiore, or Council of the Citizens, and in a select body, called the Consiglio degli Scelti, or Select Council. The first of these was to be composed of at least one thousand citizens, who could derive their citizenship by descent, and were upwards of thirty years of age; the latter consisted of eighty members, who were elected half-yearly from the great council, and were upwards of forty years of age." When the government thus constituted was consolidated a general amnesty for the Medici was proclaimed, a measure earnestly advocated by Girolamo.

Savonarola had long cherished the idea of seeing the government of Florence assume the form of a Theocracy,

with God himself for its Head, and religion its all-pervading element; and now these hopes seemed on the eve of being accomplished. The Florentines, so lately given up to frivolity and vice, were seized with a general religious enthusiasm. Shops were shut till after the morning sermon; and "even in winter the church of San Marco was beset soon after midnight by devotees, who waited until it was opened, then lighting their tapers, remained in silent prayer until the mighty preacher appeared." Games and places of public amusement were put down or abandoned; idleness and vice were compelled to withdraw from public view; industry and sobriety were encouraged and rewarded, and attendance on religious services filled up the intervals of necessary business. The gay processions in which the people used so greatly to delight, were displaced by religious dances, accompanied by the singing of hymns: and during the season when in other years the city rang with the maddening pleasures of the carnival, bonfires were lighted in the public squares, in which were consumed books, statues, and pictures, which Savonarola had condemned as of heathenish or immoral tendency. So general was the excitement, that even the celebrated artist, Fra Bartholomeo, assisted in the work of destruction.

Savonarola's joy at this change was farther increased by the success, at least partially, of his efforts for the reformation of the monasteries. He had found this a difficult work. The indisposition of the monks themselves, and the negligence of the discipline of the general congregation with which they were connected, threw many obstacles in the way of his attempts to introduce the severe rule of St. Dominic. But in time the monks of San Marco became imbued with his own spirit, and the influence spread to other cloisters. These, with a new society of young brethren which he had established at Fiesole, were now eager to adopt a stricter discipline, and for this purpose were anxious to be separated from the

general government of their order, and placed under the superintendence of Savonarola. To the great satisfaction of the Prior, this was at length effected.

In the meantime a new occupant had ascended the papal throne. Innocent VIII. survived Lorenzo de Medici but a few months, and the tiara was now worn by Alexander VI., a man who has been designated "the scourge of Christendom and the opprobrium of the human race;" "an incarnation of the Satanic spirit itself, who, having purchased the vacant chair of the apostate vicar of Christ, despised mankind too much to flatter their mock reverence of piety, by playing the hypocrite on the desecrated throne of superstition." Alexander was not unobservant of the monk of Florence, but he felt that caution must be used in opposing him. Savonarola was fully aware that an opportunity only was wanted to destroy him. "Do you ask me," he says, "in general what will be the end of the conflict? I answer, Victory! But if you ask me in particular? then I answer, Death! But death is not extinction! Rather, it serves to spread abroad the light! This light, as I have evermore declared, is spread wider than you believe. It is already in many hearts; and if you knew how many were enlightened thereby, not only here, but in various places, you would be astonished and change your lives. Write to Rome that this light is kindled in all places, howbeit it is not yet known, yet will it soon be perceived, and divisions spring up therefrom. But Rome shall not quench this fire, as nevertheless it will endeavour to do. Nay, if it quenches it in one, then will another and a stronger break out."

The Pope's first decided step was issuing a brief, commanding Savonarola not to preach at Florence during the Lent of 1495, but at Lucca. Savonarola prepared to obey, but the magistrates interfered, and wrote to the Pope, entreating that the command might be withdrawn. Alexander, seeing that the time had not yet arrived for

attacking the popular preacher, yielded to their entreaties, and permitted Savonarola to occupy his usual place.

The Pope felt himself to be in a difficult position. He was not a man to hesitate about using the most extreme measures, if they were likely to prove successful. But how was he to reach his enemy? It was not to be expected that the Florentines would deliver him up. They had already braved the dreaded excommunication of the church, rather than cast out an innocent citizen; and now their respect for the church or their fear of its spiritual thunders, was not increased by the heretical teaching to which they had submitted themselves. In this dilemma, Alexander sent for a bishop of the Dominican order, and said to him, "I desire, that as a brother of the same order, you will answer the sermons of Savonarola, and controvert effectually their arguments." The bishop expressed his willingness to do as desired, if his Holiness would only furnish him with arms, declaring that as Savonarola reproved the vices of the clergy, in which he spoke truly, he must be informed what he was to reply. "What then must we do with him?" asked the perplexed Pontiff. "Reward him," replied the bishop, "give him a red hat—make a cardinal of him and a friend at once. Send to him Ludovico, a man equally learned with himself, and let him argue with Savonarola, not forgetting as his strongest argument, this offer—to be promised on condition that he abstains from prophesying, and retracts whatever he has said and written." In pursuance of this advice, Ludovico is despatched to Florence, where he is kindly received by Savonarola, who listens patiently to his arguments. They are, however, ineffectual, and at length the offer of a cardinalate is made. "Come to my sermon to-morrow," said Savonarola, "and you shall hear my answer." On the morrow Ludovico was in his place, where he had to listen to the most vehement denunciations of the corruptions of the church. "No other red hat," cries the

preacher, "will I have than that of martyrdom, coloured with my own blood." Verily this is a true servant of God, exclaimed Ludovico, and returned to Rome to relate the ill success of his embassy.

Reference has been made to the prophesying of Savonarola. On this subject it is difficult to form a decided opinion. He was always accused by his enemies of making pretensions to supernatural inspiration, and was certainly regarded by his friends as a prophet. There can be no doubt that his sermons were full of predictions of impending punishment to the corrupt church and states of Italy, predictions which frequently assumed too definite a form to be regarded simply as warnings founded on the inevitable connection between suffering and sin. His own language in regard to it is often ambiguous and sometimes contradictory. At one time, with rapt and glowing eloquence, he talks of visions, and dreams, and revelations, in terms which might well leave the impression that he believed himself supernaturally informed of the designs of Divine Providence. But again he positively denies having ever made pretensions to inspiration, and places his warnings on the sure ground of God's word. Referring to the fulfilment of the threatenings he had previously uttered, he says, "God, who cannot lie, has hitherto permitted all things which have been foretold in his word strictly to follow; whence we conclude that those things which are foretold, but have not yet happened, will without doubt in like manner receive their fulfilment." At Brescia, he declared, "I never said I was a prophet,—yet this I say, that God sent me to prophesy a scourge to Italy, which if I do I lose my body, if I do not I lose my soul." To the Pope he writes, "It is said that I speak with God. I have never affirmed this or anything like it, as all Florence can testify; but if I had, I should have incurred no penalty: it is not written in the canon or civil law, or in any book of authority, that if one says he speaks with

God he should be punished; foolish indeed and impious would be such a decree, for who can impose laws on God?"

This inconsistency is not surprising, and furnishes no reason for doubting the reformer's honesty. The legends of his church, full of tales of prophecies, and visions, and miracles, from the superstitious belief of which he was far from being emancipated, operating on an enthusiastic temperament, in times of great excitement, were likely enough to lead him to mistake his own strong convictions of the righteousness of his cause for assurances thereof from Heaven. Yet he never chooses to rest on these, never makes these the evidence of his being a true minister of Christ; the proof of that he rests on the conformity of what he taught with the Scriptures, and its effects in transforming the unbelieving and vicious into the holy and obedient children of God.

We have already referred to one result of Savonarola's exertions—the wonderful reform in Florence. This, although the most striking, was by no means the most lasting or satisfactory effect of his labours. It was produced, in a great measure, by causes totally inadequate to the creation of any real or permanent moral good—ignorant enthusiasm, and legislative authority. Many in Florence had indeed really received the truth into their hearts, and these were abiding causes of joy to the faithful teacher. But the influence under which the mass of the people acted was far different. Excited by the thrilling eloquence of Savonarola, so fitted to move the Italian mind, and terrified by his predictions of evil, which the present state of Italy seemed to verify, the fickle populace, with headlong enthusiasm, forsook their old pleasures to enter on the new course pointed out to them, the very severity of which was exciting and attractive because of its novelty. And the eloquent preacher was likewise the undaunted advocate of their dearly-cherished political privileges. Who

then so worthy to direct their republic? Thus Savonarola's party obtained the power of legislating for the Florentines, which they employed in framing such stringent laws in regard to religion and morals, as they hoped would confirm the improved habits of the people. But they miscalculated the power of such means, and already tokens of the instability of the new estate were appearing. The rigid morality of Savonarola's system had ever been hateful to many of the young nobles, who, compelled to submit for a time, were eagerly watching till the wane of the people's enthusiasm should permit them to regain their influence. Gradually this party strengthened, and although Savonarola was still in the ascendant, opposition to him began to assume a bolder front.

Savonarola continued to maintain a correspondence with the King of France, and now declared, in a letter to him, "that the Church at that time was without any true visible head, Alexander VI. having purchased his election by scandalous bribery, and having exhibited, as a man, such a degree of turpitude as was inconsistent with the Christian character, and virtually deprived him of all ecclesiastical authority." This letter fell into unfriendly hands, was opened, and its contents made known to the Pope. Alexander was so exasperated that he determined to proceed against the reformer immediately. But, knowing that he must still be wary, he spoke softly, and the papal citation which reached Girolamo stated "that his Holiness had, with joy and gratitude to God, received information that Savonarola had, with other labourers, shown himself especially active in the vineyard of the Lord. Nor did the Pope doubt but that he rightly employed the power of the Divine Spirit for the salvation of the common people. But it had at the same time been reported to him that Savonarola predicted future events, and this not by means of his own human wisdom, but by means of divine revelation; hence he desired, as it belonged to his pastoral

office, to speak with him on the subject, in order, if it was of God, to be better acquainted with him; and commanded him, therefore, by the power of holy obedience, to come as soon as might be to Rome, where he would receive him with paternal love."

Sickness, providentially, rendered it impossible for Savonarola to obey this dangerous citation, and he therefore sent to his Holiness a statement of what he had said regarding the punishment of Italy, and the reformation of the church, with an apology for not appearing before him. This occurred in July 1495, and the indisposition from which Savonarola was then suffering prevented him from preaching till about the middle of October, when he again appeared in the pulpit, weak in body, but determined in spirit as ever. "Now," he says, "have we permitted the body to repose a little, and purpose in the first place, two things:—one, to strive, and not to cease again from striving until death, but then to conquer, because the work of Christ must always conquer. Doubt not, even if I should die, that even in this way we should finally conquer. And were it so, like the Hydra of the poets, whose head, when smitten off, grew again seven-fold, even so would God waken up others. But we have this morning appeared anew on the plain of battle, for the purpose of ascertaining how the troops stand, and whether all things be fit to recommence the war."

The war had indeed commenced in earnest. Dangers thickened around the reformer in Florence; and ere many months had elapsed, his adherents thought it necessary to accompany him in public, armed for his protection. At this trying season his mind was remarkably calm, and his courage unabated. With increased severity he attacked the corruptions of the church, and with increased boldness questioned the power of its professed head; declaring publicly that if the pope suspended him from preaching he would not obey. "If," he says, "the commands of

superiors contend with the Divine decrees, no one is bound by the latter to observe the former—nay, in that case, the observance would be sin. Should the church command anything against the law of love, then say I, Thou art not the Roman Church, nor a shepherd of the same, but a man, and dost err!"

Such contumacy could no longer be tolerated, and in October 1496, Savonarola received a second papal citation, accompanied by a decree of suspension from preaching, and a brief, addressed to the Prior and convent of San Marco. The brief declared that Savonarola had found pleasure in destructive doctrines; and commanded the vicar-general of the Lombard congregation of his order to inquire into the matter.

In reply, Savonarola addressed a long letter to the Pope, in which he denied some of the charges brought against him, and explained and defended his conduct in other particulars. He complained likewise of the appointment of the vicar-general as judge in the case, inasmuch as he was his avowed enemy.

At the request of the Signory, Savonarola continued to preach, and multitudes hastened to receive the sacrament from his hands, although by so doing they separated themselves from the Church of Rome.

The reformer's next step was a bold one. He addressed letters to the Emperor of Germany, and the Kings of France, Spain, Hungary, and England, requesting them to call a general council of the church. One of these epistles fell into Alexander's hands, to whom nothing could be more unwelcome than the whole of its contents, but one sentence in particular was not to be forgotten. "True then, I most emphatically give you assurance," runs the letter, "by the authority of the word of the Lord, that this Alexander the Sixth is no pope, and cannot be recognised as pope, not only because he has bought the papal chair with scandalous simony, not only on account of his many public vices,

but on account of his secret scandalous actions, which, at fitting time and place, we will bring to light. Yes, I say to you, that he is no Christian, and believes in no Almighty God."

Alexander now addressed himself to the Signory of Florence, charging them to deliver up to him Savonarola, "the son of blasphemy." But the enraged Pontiff was again thwarted. The Signory reply, in a very respectful tone indeed, but firmly defending their preacher, and assuring his Holiness that the evil reports he has received of him were false and calumnious.

The power of Savonarola's friends in Florence was, however, declining; and, soon after, a Signory was elected decidedly unfavourable to him. Many circumstances combined at the same time to prejudice the populace against him. The French alliance, so warmly advocated by him, had become unpopular; and the discontents of the people having been farther excited by the high price of provisions, the friends of Piero de Medici thought it a good opportunity to plot for his restoration. The conspiracy was discovered, and five distinguished citizens condemned to death, without being allowed—what by law they were entitled to—an appeal to the great council. This cruel and illegal act was unjustly charged on Savonarola, whose credit was thereby much injured. It could no longer be doubted that a re-action was taking place in the public mind, and the idol of the fickle crowd may soon expect to become its victim. Happily for himself, Girolamo was more and higher than the mere popular favourite. He had sought not fame, nor power, but the diffusion of truth and righteousness. He had already pursued this in the face of peril; he had maintained the integrity of his purpose amidst the temptations of the high position to which he had been elevated and he was again ready to encounter reproach and suffering on its behalf. Persecution was not to him unexpected or terrifying. In its fire he had often declared

the purification of the church should be accomplished, and he had always calculated on its being his own portion.

His friends now anxiously entreated him not to appear in public. But such timid counsels suited not his intrepid spirit. He went on with his work as usual, and, at the feast of the Ascension, preached in the cathedral. On this occasion many of his enemies mixed with the congregation, and, at a given signal, during the time of service, excited a tumult, in the confusion of which they hoped to get possession of Savonarola's person. But his adherents gathered quickly around the pulpit, and being armed, succeeded in conveying him safely to San Marco. The Signory, without taking the trouble to inquire into the causes of the disturbance, made it a pretext for prohibiting Savonarola to preach; which prohibition, as a peaceful citizen, he thought it right to regard.

Most welcome to Rome were the tidings of these events. On the 12th of May 1497, Savonarola was excommunicated by the Pope, and a brief despatched to the Franciscans in Florence, directing them to carry the sentence into effect. Much confusion ensued. In some churches the brief was exhibited, but others refused to publish it, on the ground that it was not delivered in proper form. And many hesitated not to say that the excommunication was invalid, inasmuch as it proceeded on vague reports, and had not been preceded by any properly conducted examination. Others were bold enough to declare that when the Pope's instructions were to destruction, and not to edification, they ought to be resisted.

Savonarola employed his rétirement in writing letters of consolation and encouragement, addressed to all true believers, and in self-denying attentions to those who were suffering from a pestilence then raging in Florence. So far as regarded himself, his mind was peaceful and even joyful; but over Florence, his own loved Florence, now banishing the word of God from it, and eagerly returning

to its old courses of folly and sin, he mourned with agony of spirit.

In July 1497, the hopes of his party revived. The Signory then elected was favourable to Savonarola, and wrote to the Pope, entreating him to withdraw his excommunication. In answer, Alexander required Savonarola to appear at Rome, but the reformer was too well acquainted with his enemy to trust himself in his meshes. He recommenced preaching in the church of San Marco. The archbishop and vicar excommunicated all who heard him; nevertheless, many attended his sermons. The Signory of January and February 1498 was still more friendly to the Prior, and he was permitted to preach in the Duomo. The excitement was intense, and the ample church was crowded, as when, in more prosperous days, the citizens left their employments to listen to the words of the great preacher. Fearlessly he asserted the impotency of the excommunication. "He who commands anything against love is excommunicated by God. To me it is enough if Christ curses me not, but blesses me. I have indeed erred in other things," he added, "because I am a sinful man, but not in thus having preached the truth of Christ; the proof thereof is, that my life has agreed with reason and Holy Writ."

Pope Alexander, thus disappointed of his prey, threatened to lay Florence under an interdict for permitting such doings "as would not be expected from Turks and heathens." But too soon was Florence to execute his cruel purposes. In March 1498, a Signory came into office decidedly opposed to Savonarola, and on the first day of their government, he preached in the cathedral for the last time. He continued his ministrations in the church of San Marco, which was filled with numerous congregations, notwithstanding the refusal of the other clergy to give absolution or Christian burial to any who resorted thither. On the 13th of March, Savonarola wrote his last

letter to the Pope, in which he appeals from his tribunal to that of the all-righteous Judge; and closes with these remarkable words: "Oh! would that your Holiness would not delay to consider the salvation of your soul."

CHAPTER V.

THE ORDEAL AND THE MARTYRDOM.

We now approach the most painful period of Savonarola's history, a period so clouded by gross superstition as to throw a shade over the otherwise bright career of the reformer. Amongst the most inveterate of his enemies were the Franciscan monks, who, jealous of the honour which their rivals, the Dominicans, derived from him, were eager by all means to effect his disgrace. Between one of these Francesco di Puglia, and Domenico de Prescia, a zealous but imprudent disciple of Savonarola, frequent contests took place; the Franciscan insisting that as Savonarola professed to teach truth and to prophesy, he was bound to establish his authority by miracles. In the Lent of 1498, both the disputants were preaching in Florence, when Francesco defended the validity of the excommunication, and again dared Domenico or his master to supernatural proof of the truth of Savonarola's doctrines. The ordeal by fire was proposed and agreed to. Savonarola took no part in the contest, and had always declared that miracles were unnecessary to prove what could be established by other arguments. Yet he had admitted the possibility of the recurrence of miracles, and his enemies fixed him to that point. At length in the wild excitement of the time, he was prevailed on to consent to the ordeal; and such was the

general fanaticism, that not only men, but even women and children, contended for the honour of going through the fire on his behalf.

Domenico de Prescia was ultimately chosen as Savonarola's champion, and Giuliano Rondinelli for the Franciscan's; Francesco di Puglia having declined to endure the ordeal with any other than Savonarola himself. On the day of trial, the 7th of April 1498, a vast multitude surround the pile. At noon the Dominicans are seen approaching, headed by Savonarola, whose powerful voice is heard leading their chaunt of the sixty-eighth Psalm. The Franciscans follow their champion, in silence and barefoot. All is ready, and the excitement of the people at the highest pitch, when an unforeseen difficulty occurs. Domenico insists on going into the fire with the host in his hands. The Franciscans violently object to the impiety of exposing their God to the flames. Savonarola in vain explains that it is only the accidental part which can be burned. The dispute continues and increases in violence —the champions on both sides, now that the danger is so near, probably are glad to catch at any excuse for avoiding it—till the matter is decided in an unexpected manner by a violent storm of rain and wind, which so deluges and scatters the pile, as to render it impossible to relight it.

The people were incensed at losing the exciting spectacle they had assembled to witness, and threw the blame on the Dominicans, whom they pursued to San Marco with insulting cries, taunting Savonarola, that after having taught them to cry Viva Christo, he should now propose to commit him to the flames. The next day San Marco was stormed by the infuriated populace, and Savonarola, Domenico de Prescia, and Silvestro Maruffi, taken into custody and carried to prison in the midst of the most fearful tumult. Some of their party were murdered, and their houses plundered, and others fled to their villas in the country.

Messengers were immediately despatched to Rome with an account of these transactions, which gave so much satisfaction to the Pope, that he "granted authority to absolve every one who had transgressed in this affair, even though by murder." In regard to the trial by ordeal, Alexander displayed his wonted craft. His permission had been asked to hold it. The decision was, that it should be prohibited as contrary to canonical law; which decision, however, his Holiness took care should not reach Florence until two days after the time appointed for the trial. And now he hastens to send to Francesco and his order the expression of his approbation of their "pious, religious, and memorable work."

The Pope was anxious to get Savonarola into his own hands, but the Florentines determined that he should be tried and punished by themselves. Accordingly a court was formed of sixteen judges of inquiry and two commissioners from Rome, assisted by several Franciscans and other ecclesiastics. Savonarola was brought before them, and underwent a lengthened examination, during which he defended his conduct so clearly and resolutely that his judges were intimidated. They, however, resolved on forcing some confession from him by torture, and wrote down the incoherent and half-finished sentences which were wrung from him while enduring the agony of the rack. But so soon as relieved from the instruments of torture, he "re-asserted that he had always preached the truth, adding, that if indeed he had said anything else while suffering torture, such averments were to be counted false, or as merely proceeding from excess of pain." The brethren of San Marco were examined, but without eliciting anything to criminate the accused. It was, however, necessary that the trial should be speedily brought to a close, lest the current of popular favour should again turn, and the intended victim escape. A forged protocol of Savonarola's answers, in which they were altered and

falsified to suit the object of his persecutors, was prepared and published; and the reformer, with his brethren, Domenico and Silvestro, condemned to be hanged and burned. This issue was already determined on at Rome, the Pope having declared that Savonarola should die though he were John the Baptist.

On the 22nd of May, the prisoners were informed that they should die the next day. On the morning of the 23rd, Savonarola administered the sacrament to himself and his fellow-sufferers; after which they were conducted to the place which a few weeks before had been prepared for the ordeal by fire, and where now stood a scaffold and funeral pile. There the brief of degradation was read to them, and they were disrobed of their clerical garments; Girolamo the while standing silent and abstracted, as a man who had already separated himself from the world, wherein he had no longer any work to perform for his Divine Master; but when the bishop took him by the hand, and instead of the form, "I separate thee from the Church Militant," used the words, "I separate thee from the Church Triumphant," Savonarola replied, loud enough to be heard by those standing round, "From the Militant, but not from the Triumphant; that thou canst not do." To a friend who reminded him of what he had formerly done, he said, "Praise and honour of men I need not." When asked if he went composedly to meet death, he answered, "Should I not willingly die for His sake who willingly died for me, a sinful man?" Just before ascending the scaffold, the impotent absolution of the Pope was bestowed on them: "His Holiness, Alexander VI., frees you from the punishment of purgatory, gives you perfect remission of your sins, and places you in the state of your innocence." The confessor asked Savonarola if he had anything to say; to which he replied, "Pray for me, and tell my friends that they take no offence at my death, but continue in my doctrine and in peace." He then took

the place assigned him on the scaffold between his two brethren, looked for a moment on the insulting crowd, and the next was beyond the reach of all his enemies. "Soon the bodies mingled themselves with the ashes, which were taken thence in cars, and thrown from the old bridge into the Arno."

The cruel and foolish scene which led immediately to Savonarola's disgrace may seem to throw doubt on his claim to the title of a martyr for truth. That scene does indeed elicit an amount of ignorant and presumptuous superstition which contrasts painfully with his previous conduct, and greatly tarnishes his reputation. But it were wrong to ascribe his death to the affair of the ordeal. He did not die the victim of this weak and sinful act. He died because he too faithfully witnessed for the truth to a generation of scornful and wicked men. The infidel rulers of the apostate Church of Rome had long before determined to silence in death the unwelcome voice which had dared to speak to them of Scripture, of truth, and of holiness; and the temptation by which he was unhappily seduced was laid for him by enemies, who, if they had not succeeded in thus ensnaring him, had other weapons ready for his destruction.

It has been said that the reformation contemplated by Savonarola was practical rather than theoretical, a reformation of life rather than of doctrine. To a certain extent this is correct. His indignation was early aroused and ever kept vehement, by the fearful corruption of morals which prevailed; and his sermons consisted more of admonitions to Christian life, than of expositions of Christian doctrine. From his own experience, he had acquired a knowledge of what constituted real spiritual life, and of its progress in the soul, more ample and consistent than was his acquaintance with abstract truth. But even as to the latter, he was far in advance of his contemporaries; and his doctrinal knowledge, although not profound or syste-

matic, was neither vague nor uncertain. It was from the right seed he expected the right fruit. He understood well, and failed not to inculcate those truths, the belief of which could alone produce true holiness and evangelical obedience. The cardinal truth of the Gospel, the distinguishing doctrine of the Reformation—justification by faith alone—he joyfully recognised. Luther, the great modern apostle of this doctrine, acknowledged Savonarola to have been a fellow-worker, and classed him with John Huss and Jerome of Prague.

It is in regard to the institutions and ordinances of the Church of Rome, that we find error cleave most tenaciously to the mind of Savonarola. He declaimed against the perversions and abuses of these institutions, but he failed to perceive the unscriptural character of the institutions themselves. Nor is this wonderful. Groping through thick darkness, or dim twilight equally perplexing, and battling his way to every new iota of truth, through a thousand prepossessions and obstinate prejudices, we may feel surprised rather that he learned so much than that he left so much unlearned. Let it not be forgotten, that he enunciated one great principle which opened to indefinite advancement, the supreme authority and sufficiency of Scripture, and the right of the people to learn for themselves from the revelation which God had given, what He would have them to do. To the neglect of Scripture he ascribed the corruptions of the church; and to its restoration to its proper place, above the visible church, above the fathers, above the confessor; to its restoration to the hands of the people and its reception into their hearts, he looked for the church's renovation.

In judging of the character of Savonarola, we must regard him in reference to his times and to his country. Considered absolutely, we discover much error in his mind; considered comparatively, we must acknowledge it

to be wonderfully enlightened. Everything without him and within tended to make him a dreaming enthusiast, a self-mortifying ascetic, it might be, worthy of a place in the calendar beside those saints who thought to please God and benefit mankind by deserting the active service of both. The grace of God rescued him, and conforming his soul to the divine ethics of the New Testament, sent him forth to preach practical Christianity,—that personal reformation and obedient acknowledgment of the mighty power of divine truth, and its personal application as a rule of faith and life to every believer, which is the only true foundation of any reformation of the church. Much indeed he beheld only dimly, and obscured by the influences of early education and surrounding circumstances. But in this respect the most enlightened fathers of the Reformation have resembled him in their early career. When the light of divine truth broke in upon their darkened understandings, they beheld surrounding objects—as the blind man, when he received sight at the miraculous touch of our Lord, saw his fellow-men as trees walking. Truth after truth became clear to their minds, while as fellow-workers together, they guided one another through the mazes with which each was at times beset. Let us not forget, when judging of the Italian Reformer, to consider the ignorance, scepticism, and licentiousness that surrounded him; the practical corruptions that held him, throughout all his arduous course, grappling vice in every offensive form, and struggling unaided in the cause of personal religion. Viewed in this light, the errors and extravagances of Savonarola appear as the natural result of the circumstances that surrounded him. Born amid the profligacy and dissipation that degraded the church, and the strifes and dissensions that made the states of Italy in the sixteenth century the arena for the strangest excesses of popular license, the Italian Reformer partook of the character of the times, and his teaching was directed

against the individual sins of his contemporaries, rather than against the radical unchristianity of the Papal system. Yet, with all this, no one can rise from the record of his eventful career without pronouncing him to have been a true reformer, and an undoubted martyr in the cause of truth.

Viewing Savonarola, however, altogether apart from his standing as one of the most prominent among the religious reformers of Italy, he is still an object of interest and admiration. It required, indeed, no slight degree of courage to assume the position which he did, as the teacher of Scripture in opposition to papal authority. It was to stand forth almost alone in the high places of the field, and to face, with unquailing heroism, a power that seemed capable of crushing him on the instant, should he dare to call its infallible authority in question. We have seen that he not only manifested the courage necessary for such a step, but also the resolute firmness that upheld him while maintaining it, and enabled him calmly to behold the dangers threatening on every hand, and the exasperated adherents of Rome mustering every available force against him. It will not, therefore, be uninteresting, if we endeavour to glance at the peculiar mental powers, and the natural disposition of the man who wielded for a time so great an influence over the Italian peninsula, and brought Scriptural Protestantism almost to lay its triumphant protest at the gates of Rome.

Like all the men who have ever exercised much control over others, Savonarola exhibits, amid all his enthusiasm, great self-command. We have seen, when he yielded to the solicitations of his own community, and ascended the pulpit in expectation of wielding there the influence he had already begun to exercise in private, how great was his failure. Yet we do not find him, as weaker men would have done, persisting in the attempt, and charging on others the blame of a failure that was

solely due to himself. On the contrary, he desists from the effort, yet with the innate conviction that he shall yet prove himself capable of accomplishing what he has now failed in. He retires for a time from the field; but it is only, like a prudent and wary general, to arrange his forces, and secure for himself ultimate triumph. When he appears again, it is to sway the passions of the multitude; to enchain their minds by his doctrines, or to bind them to him by the relying faith of weaker natures, so that even over those whom the doctrines that he taught cannot be believed to have reached, he still accomplished, for a time, a great moral victory. One of the most profligate cities of Europe became one of the most devout; religion was made a thing of every-day life; and, as will ever be the case in like circumstances, multitudes yielded to the force of popular influence and surrounding example, and assumed the forms of a religious profession, whose hearts were altogether untouched. It was so in the days of the apostles' preaching, who had such converts as Ananias, Simon Magus, and the like, and it has been the case in every reformation which the world has witnessed since.

Savonarola experienced all the evils resulting from such partisans of the sunshine. So long as prosperous breezes filled the swelling sails, they were his foremost abettors, yet they probably were among the loudest who shouted in triumph around the pile of martyrdom. It was a strange people he had to deal with, and the scenes that accompanied his labours were correspondingly unwonted. "Sometimes," says an Italian writer, "when he was preaching, in the very midst of his sermon, drums would be beaten and all sorts of noises made, to prevent his continuing. Often, as he was coming from San Marco to San Liparata, over the Via del Cocomero, the children of the opposite party would jeer at and insult him, and then the children of his party would come up to defend him; whereupon, as was the custom in all such cases with the Florentine

children, both sides would begin fighting with stones, and in the excitement, grave citizens were not unfrequently seen to participate in this juvenile warfare. On one occasion, for example, M. Luca Corsini, though a doctor of high repute, set to work with the Frate's boys, flinging stones at the other party; and, on another occasion, Giovanbattista Ridolfi, one of the most reputable and staid citizens of his time, made himself conspicuous in the same way; for Savonarola being interrupted in his sermon at San Liparata, the worthy man rushed out of his house, which stood hard by, like a madman, with a bill on his shoulder, shouting *Viva Christo*, the Frate's boys taking up the cry."

Such is a sample of the scenes that frequently occurred during the labours of the Florentine Reformer; yet, a more striking proof of his popular influence is to be found in the fact, that even coins were struck in Florence commemorative of the triumph of the doctrines he taught. These coins, though now very rare, are still to be met with in the cabinets of the curious; a specimen in silver is preserved in the collection of the Earl of Orford, on one side of which is the Florentine device, or *fleur-de-lis*, with the motto, "Senatus populusque Florentinus;" on the other, a cross, with the motto, "Jesus Christus Rex Noster"—a novel motto for an Italian State—"Jesus Christ, our King."

In all this, as in the numerous instances of Savonarola's varied influence over all classes of the community, during his brief mission among the fickle citizens of Florence, we discover proofs of the very strange state of society at the period. There is a certain freshness and simplicity in most of the proceedings of the easily excited Italians of that age, which partakes of the frivolity as well as the guilelessness of youth. It was a period when an entirely new state of things was being brought about. Italy, under the influence of reviving learning, and the reconstruction of particular institutions, was renewing its youth; we need

not wonder, if, with the ardour natural to such a state of things, it should also betray, at times, somewhat of the fickleness and frivolity of childhood. The marked character, however, of the leaders of society, was a refined scepticism, which was nourished by their devotion to the reviving love for ancient literature. The dawn of that new state of things, that brought moral as well as intellectual light to other nations, was a work of the head alone with them. The heart slumbered inert, uninfluenced by the vivifying movement. While Leo the Tenth, the cardinal of Florence, hastened on the Reformation in other lands, by his daring schemes of shameless trafficking in the assumed graces of the church; the ill-gotten wealth that he thus acquired was squandered in luxurious revels, that degraded the arts and learning he professed to patronise. Profligacy and scepticism were fostered by the example of the church, and the day of hope passed by for Italy, which the doctrine and example of Savonarola had seemed to herald.

Such is a just picture of the period during which Savonarola laboured; and of himself, with all his faults and failings undisguised. The reader will draw his own deductions from the evidence. While he sees some things to regret, and others requiring to be weighed in connection with the circumstances of the times, he will still behold much to admire, and be prepared to pronounce Savonarola the most faithful and courageous preacher of truth that Italy has witnessed since the revival of learning in Europe.

PASQUILS

OF

THE REFORMATION.



THE characters that chiefly engage the attention of the reader throughout the pages of this volume, are selected from among the earnest agents in some of the greatest movements affecting the Reformation of religion throughout Europe; men who counted not their lives dear to them when the interests of truth and pure religion hung in the balance. The Reformation of the fifteenth century, however, was no mere work of man. Its wonderful progress, in defiance of secret machinations, and the opposition of open violence,

was the work of no single party or sect, but one of the mighty births of time, which, in the providence of God, many diverse causes worked together to accomplish. We shall here consider some of those secondary, yet very efficient means by which the downfall of the Romish despotism was promoted, and the popular mind made ready to welcome a new and better order of things.

There is perhaps no more powerful weapon can be wielded against corruption and error than that of ridicule. It is one which truth itself has often found more difficult to withstand than the most violent opposition. But with hypocrisy and superstition it becomes an invincible adversary. The bold front that can face the pointed finger of scorn with open breast, and challenge the searching scrutiny of its defamers, is wanting there. Anger, and—where it has the power—violence, and persecution, are the only resorts to scare away what dared not be boldly repelled. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at, that the humorous poets of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, with the satirists of the same and of later periods, should have been among the foremost to assail the weak points of the corrupt dominant Church. High pretensions to sanctity, and claims to immunities and privileges, as an order specially set apart by favour of Heaven, could only command the reverence of the most ignorant and besotted minds, when they appeared associated with luxury, corruption, and vice. When light began to break in upon this long-established system of error, the thoughtless and indifferent were content to mingle ridicule with their own superstitious observances; the more thoughtful scholar, contenting himself with a formal acknowledgment of the universal creed, secretly relapsed into scepticism; while, here and there, some silent, meditative student pierced through the superstitious encumbrances which had accumulated around the simple plan of the gospel of Christ, and became a humble and contrite believer. Some even

of these, however, owed their first earnest thoughts, not to the prelections of the schoolmen, the controversies of the theologians, or even to the re-discovered book of revelation, but to the pungent exposures of the satirist.

A very striking instance of this has been referred to in the accompanying narrative of John Craig, the Scottish Dominican, where the poems of Sir David Lindsay are proved to have been the sole means of awakening the citizens of Perth to a rejection of the corrupt and erroneous system of the Romish Church; and of leading Andrew Simpson, an able scholar of the period, to abandon it for the cause of the Reformation. Indeed, such was the influence of this nervous satirist on his age and nation, that it has been remarked by an able and discriminating writer, not without some degree of justice, that "Sir David Lindsay was more the reformer of Scotland than John Knox; for he had prepared the ground, and John only sowed the seed."

The satirists were, in fact, in many cases, the forerunners of the Reformation,—the light skirmishers and sharpshooters who preceded the movements of the great army, and carried on a desultory yet very effectual warfare against the same powerful foe. The great source of power, however, which in many cases attached to these assailants, arose from the fact, that while they were exposing the corruptions of the Romish Church, and making its pardoners, and its miracle-shrines and holy pilgrimages, the subject of universal ridicule, they were members, and sometimes even priests of that very Church, and entertained no thought of renouncing her communion.

Among the poems of the middle ages which have been preserved to our own time, we find abundant evidence of the fact, that in the darkest and most debased periods of European history, the discriminating sense of right and wrong was never so entirely overlaid by superstition as to prevent the people from recognising the inconsistency between the precepts of their religion and the practice of

its professors. The vows of celibacy and mortification of the monastic institutions only made the more apparent their indolence and gross sensuality; and whatever gleams of the purity and holiness of scriptural faith pierced through the superstitious tenets of the period, tended to exhibit the more strikingly the impure and unholy practices of those who professed to be their heavenly guides.

Dr. M'Crie, when alluding to the testimony borne in all ages by the Vaudois of the Italian Alps against the corruptions of the Church of Rome, remarks:—"The poets of the middle ages, known by the name of Troubadours, had joined with the Vaudois in condemning the reigning vices of the priests; and several of the superstitious notions and practices by which the clergy increased their power and wealth were assailed in those lively satires, which were written in the ancient language of Provence, but read by the inhabitants of Italy and Spain. It is a curious circumstance, and may be considered as reflecting honour on a sect which has been so unmercifully traduced by its adversaries, that the *Noble Leycon*, and other religious poems of the Vaudois, which are among the earliest and rarest monuments of Provençal poetry, contain few of those satirical reflections on the clergy which abound in the writings of their contemporaries who remained in the Romish Church. 'Indulgences, (says one of the latter,) pardons, God and the devil,—all, the priests make use of. To some they allot paradise by their pardons; others they send to hell by their excommunications. There are no crimes for which pardon cannot be obtained from the monks: for money they grant to renegades and usurers that sepulture which they deny to the poor who have nothing to pay. To live at ease, to buy good fish, fine wheat bread, and exquisite wines, is their great object during the whole year. God grant me to be a monk, if salvation is to be purchased at this price!' 'If God (says another Troubadour,) save those whose sole merit lies in

loving good cheer, and paying their court to women,—if the Black Monks, the White Monks, the Templars, the Hospitallers, gain heaven, then St. Peter and St. Andrew were great fools to submit to such torments for the sake of a paradise which costs others so little.'"

Here we find the rude minstrels of the middle ages pointing out in sarcastic strains the contrast between the Founder and first teachers of the Christian faith, even as made known to them in the corrupt legends of the Church, and the claimants of apostolic succession in their own day, and doubtless the people were not slow to appreciate so palatable a lesson. For, however much the degraded and superstitious mind may cling to priestcraft when under the influence of fear, it recoils in better moments from the spiritual despotism that treads it under foot, and triumphs in the degradation of its enslaver.

A fitter subject for ridicule can scarcely be conceived than that which the Church of the middle ages presented in every part of Europe. But when we consider that, with all its presumptuous folly, it was not a thing at which the people smiled, but an object of their most earnest veneration, and on whose vain illusions they were perilling their eternal interests, it becomes a subject of most painful reflection. Here is the representation of the Church previous to the Reformation, furnished by Myconius, who was himself long a monk, and a believer in its infallibility, but who afterwards became a fellow-labourer with Luther in its overthrow:—

"The sufferings and merits of Christ were looked upon as an idle tale, or as the fictions of Homer. There was no thought of the faith by which we become partakers of the Saviour's righteousness, and of the heritage of eternal life. Christ was looked upon as a severe judge, prepared to condemn all who should not have recourse to the intercession of the saints, or to the papal indulgences. Other intercessors appeared in his place:—first, the Virgin Mary,

like the Diana of paganism, and then the saints, whose numbers were continually augmented by the popes. These mediators granted their intercession only to such applicants as had deserved well of the orders founded by them. For this it was necessary to do, not what God had commanded in his Word, but to perform a number of works invented by monks and priests, and which brought money to the treasury. These works were Ave-Marias, the prayers of Saint Ursula and of Saint Bridget: they must chant and cry night and day. There were as many resorts for pilgrims as there were mountains, forests, and valleys. But these penances might be compounded for with money. The people, therefore, brought to the convents and to the priests money and every thing that had any value,—fowls, ducks, geese, eggs, wax, straw, butter, and cheese. Then the hymns resounded, the bells rang, incense filled the sanctuary, sacrifices were offered up, the larders overflowed, the glasses went round, and masses terminated and concealed these pious orgies. The bishops no longer preached, but they consecrated priests, bells, monks, churches, chapels, images, books, and cemeteries; and all this brought in a large revenue. Bones, arms, and feet, were preserved in gold and silver boxes; they were given out during mass for the faithful to kiss, and this too was a source of great profit."

Nothing but the most abject and besotted ignorance could prove a safeguard to such a system. An ancient Irish legend represents the origin of one of the most extensive lakes of Ireland from an enchanted well, whence the whole inhabitants of the valley drew abundant supplies, on this single condition, that the sun should never shine on its waters, nor the well be opened to the light of day. Ages passed, during which the contented natives of the valley drew their water from the well before sunrise, and enjoyed uninterruptedly the abundance it afforded. But one morning a careless maiden filled her

pitchers and withdrew without restoring the stone that covered the mouth of the well. The rays of the morning sun shining into the cottage window reminded her of the fatal omission. She rushed out to repair her negligence, but the formerly peaceful waters were now gushing forth in torrents. All efforts to stay them were unavailing: they rose higher and higher within the vale of the enchanted well, and now the Irish peasant believes that he can discover by moonlight, in the far depths of the placid lake, the ruins of villages and churches once peopled in the happy valley.

This popular legend might almost be received as a fable intended to prefigure the Romish Church,—drawing just sufficient from the fountains of truth, bestowed by God for the instruction of all, to enable her priests to maintain their own system for ages, while the pure well of divine truth was guarded with jealous care from the light of day. But the rays of the morning broke in on it at last. The superstitious guardians of the enchanted fountain perished in the overflowing of the waters, at which all are now privileged to drink, not as from a covered and guarded well, mysteriously trammelled by superstitious fears, but as from a mighty and inexhaustible ocean, which knows no diminution, though the nations come to it to draw from thence their supplies.

Rogers, in his most graceful and beautiful poem of "Italy," alludes to Boccaccio, the celebrated author of the "Decameron," a work which early set the example of engaging popular literature in the cause of reformation, by turning to ridicule the follies of the monks. This work illustrates, in its grossness as well as in its pungent satire, the corruptness of the period. But it is a composition of very high merit as a literary production, and has served as a rich mine from whence our own Shakspeare and many of the most eminent writers of Europe have drawn sug-

gestive thoughts and models for their compositions. The poet thus refers to him:—

> "He, whose dream it was,
> (It was no more,) sleeps in a neighbouring vale;
> Sleeps in the church, where, in his ear I ween,
> The friar poured out his wondrous catalogue:—
> A ray, imprimis, of the star that shone
> To the Wise Men; a vial full of sounds,
> The musical chimes of the great bell that hung
> In Solomon's temple; and, tho' last not least,
> A feather from the angel Gabriel's wing,
> Dropt in the Virgin's chamber!"

Such is a very graphic, and no overdrawn, picture of the actual exhibitions that the Italian novelist witnessed, and of the tales he listened to and turned to ridicule,—if indeed any version of these could be rendered more extravagant and false than that which was gravely retailed to the people by their religious teachers. Before, however, we investigate the influence produced by the revivers of letters who succeeded the early Troubadours in the exposure of the follies of the Church, we shall examine some other proceedings directly allied to those so curiously classified in the poetical version of the "Friar's Tale," and in which the Church effectually, though unconsciously, aided in her own overthrow.

CHAPTER II.

THE ABBOT OF MISRULE.

THE Church of Rome during the middle ages treated the nations as children, who might safely be amused with "profane and old wives' fables." She first superadded fable, tradition, and legend, to the simplicity of Scripture

truth, and then withdrew altogether the Book of Inspiration, leaving the poisoned mind to feast on the tainted substitute. The plan fully succeeded for a time. Degraded Europe became her slave, and contentedly submitted to her despotic sway. It was the sin of the apostate Church thus to hide God and truth from the people, but it was her folly to forget that the child would yet grow to manhood and despise the workers of these frauds that had imposed on its imbecile nonage.

When once the system of fraud was introduced, the sole limit that checked its use was the credulity of the people. Relics and monkish miracles, such as those that the Reformation in England brought to light, were the cheapest and most profitable traffic in which the priesthood could engage. When credulity and blind superstition had aroused the spirit of pilgrimage throughout Europe, and paved the way for the fanaticism of Peter the Hermit and his followers, and the madness and the wild chivalry of the Crusaders, the mintage of the Church created the most precious treasures of kings. A chip of wood, if called a bit of the true cross, was of more value than ingots of gold; a feather, a phial, or a rag, with but a seductive and appropriate title, became of worth fit to be the ransom of a kingdom. Nor was the credulity and blind superstition of the time governed even by the most common attributes of childish shrewdness: impositions that we would indeed expect a child to laugh at, were abjectly received by wondering multitudes of believers.

It was a natural transition from such frivolous yet solemn impositions to open buffoonery. The pulpit which had resounded with enunciations of the miraculous virtues of such relics, was soon made the arena of folly equally great, but stript of much of its solemn and hypocritical disguise, and the most momentous events in the narrative of our Saviour's life and sufferings, were turned into dramatic stories, and enacted in the churches for the

amusement of the audience. D'Aubigné, in his History of the state of Europe before the Reformation, thus describes some of the strange exhibitions to which we have alluded:—"In the church of All Saints, at Wittenberg, was shown a fragment of Noah's ark, some soot from the furnace of the Three Children, a piece of wood from the cradle of Jesus Christ, some hair from the beard of St. Christopher, and nineteen thousand other relics of greater or less value. At Schaffhausen was exhibited the breath of St. Joseph, that Nicodemus had received in his glove. In Wirtemberg you might meet a seller of indulgences vending his merchandise, his head adorned with a large feather plucked from the wing of St. Michael. But it was not necessary to travel far in search of these precious treasures. Men who farmed the relics traversed the whole country, hawking them about the rural districts, (as has since been the case with the Holy Scriptures,) and carrying them to the houses of the faithful, to spare them the trouble and expense of a pilgrimage. They were exhibited with pomp in the churches. These wandering hawkers paid a stipulated sum to the owners of the relics,—a per-centage on their profits. The kingdom of heaven had disappeared, and in its place a market of abominations had been opened upon earth.

Thus a spirit of profanity had invaded religion; and the holiest recollections of the Church, the seasons which more particularly summoned the faithful to holy meditation and love, were disgraced by buffoonery and heathenish profanation. The 'Revels of Easter' held a distinguished place in the records of the Church. As the festival of the resurrection of Christ ought to be celebrated with joy, the preachers studied in their sermons every thing that might raise a laugh among their hearers. One imitated the note of the cuckoo; another hissed like a goose. One dragged to the altar a layman robed in a monk's frock; a second related the most indecent stories;

and a third recounted the tricks of St. Peter, and among others, how in a tavern he had cheated his host by not paying his reckoning. The lower clergy took advantage of this opportunity to ridicule their superiors. The churches were converted into a mere stage for mountebanks, and the priests into buffoons."

It is singular how very far this spirit of unlicensed humour was carried. It seemed as though the monks, long shut up within an unnatural and burdensome system of formality and deceit, had suddenly found a safe and satisfactory outlet for their exuberant and profane satire. It was not alone in the passing revels of a church festival, or the extravagancies and buffoonery of a holiday oration from the pulpit, that this mocking spirit was displayed. The same misplaced drollery and mirth has been stamped on their illuminated missals, and carved in wood and stone on their cathedrals. A fox dressed in a monk's frock and cowl, and addressing his exhortations to a pack of geese that surrounded him with gaping bills, is a satiric reflection on the clergy repeatedly found in the missals of the fourteenth century; and which must have been drawn by some brother of the cloister to embody his own opinion of the hypocritical fraternity among whom he laboured. Similar grotesque, and sometimes grossly indecent representations are to be found on many of our ancient cathedrals and churches. On the stalls of Henry the Seventh's Chapel, at Westminster, some very singular specimens of this kind of work may be seen, such as would do credit to a Shroedter or a Cruickshanks in our own day.

But the satiric jesting with religion, and the profanation of what were deemed holy things, were not confined to the clergy. The people soon caught the example from their teachers, and were even encouraged by them, on certain occasions, to make a mockery of all the sacred offices and ceremonies of the Church. An individual was annually chosen by the populace, in different coun-

tries, who personated, for the time, the character of one of the dignitaries of the Church, which it was his chief occupation to turn into ridicule. This actor officiated as master of the revels, and was attended usually by a merry rabble of grotesquely attired characters, who were allowed the utmost license for the time, entering the churches, and enacting their follies professedly as the appointed Church services of the season. In France this character was chosen by the magistrates in many of the principal towns from among the burgesses, and bore the name of *Abbe de Liesse*, or Abbot of Mirth. His office was there held for a year, during the whole of which time he acted as the leader in the sports and mumming that took place. In England a nearly similar character existed, though chosen at the free will of the populace from their own numbers, and he there bore the title of the Abbot or Lord of Misrule. In Scotland the same personation took place under the name of the Abbot of Unreason, and his revels formed one of those popular diversions which were most strongly opposed by the Reformers, after the downfall of Popery.

We shall select the picture of this fantastic revel, as it is represented occurring within the Abbey Church of Melrose at the very period of the Reformation being effected throughout Scotland. The scene is described by the great Scottish novelist, and is supposed to take place immediately after the affrighted monks have chosen a new Abbot; nevertheless the whole picture is drawn with much life and truth, and is accompanied by reflections of a very apposite nature. The assembled monks are alarmed by riotous noises and loud knocking at the Abboy gate, upon which, after some delay, the newly-elected Abbot proceeds to the door, and demands in a loud voice, "'By whose authority do you require entrance?' 'By authority of the right reverend Lord Abbot of Unreason,' replied the voice from without; and, from the laugh which fol-

lowed, it seemed as if there was something highly ludicrous couched under this reply. 'I know not, and seek not to know, your meaning,' replied the Abbot, 'since it is probably a rude one; but begone, in the name of God, and leave his servants in peace. I speak this as having lawful authority to command here.' 'Open the door,' said another rude voice, 'and we will try titles with you, Sir Monk, and show you a superior we must all obey.' 'Break open the doors if he dallies any longer,' said a third, 'and down with the carrion monks who would bar us of our privilege!' A general shout followed. 'Ay, ay, our privilege! our privilege! down with the doors, and with the lurdane monks, if they make opposition!'

The knocking was now exchanged for blows with great hammers, to which the doors, strong as they were, must soon have given way. But the Abbot, who saw resistance would be vain, and who did not wish to incense the assailants by an attempt at offering it, besought silence earnestly, and with difficulty obtained a hearing. 'My children,' said he, 'I will save you from committing a great sin. The porter will presently undo the gate—he is gone to fetch the keys,—meantime, I pray you to consider with yourselves if you are in a state of mind to cross the holy threshold.' 'Tillyvalley for your papistry!' was answered from without; 'we are in the mood of the monks when they are merriest, and that is when they sup beef-brewis for lenten-kail. So, if your porter hath not the gout, let him come speedily, or we heave away readily.—Said I well, comrades?' 'Bravely said, and it shall be as bravely done,' said the multitude; and had not the keys arrived at that moment, and the porter, in hasty terror, performed his office, throwing open the great door, the populace would have saved him the trouble. The instant he had done so, the affrighted janitor fled, like one who has drawn the bolts of a flood-gate, and expects to be overwhelmed by the rushing inundation. The monks, with one consent,

had withdrawn themselves behind the Abbot, who alone kept his station, about three yards from the entrance, showing no signs of fear or perturbation. His brethren—partly encouraged by his devotion, partly ashamed to desert him, and partly animated by a sense of duty,—remained huddled close together, at the back of their superior. There was a loud laugh and huzza when the doors were opened; but, contrary to what might have been expected, no crowd of enraged assailants rushed into the church. On the contrary there was a cry of 'A halt!—a halt!—to order, my masters! and let the two reverend fathers greet each other, as beseems them.'

The appearance of the crowd who were thus called to order, was grotesque in the extreme. It was composed of men, women, and children, ludicrously disguised in various habits, and presenting groups equally diversified and grotesque. Here one fellow with a horse's head painted before him, and a tail behind, and the whole covered with a long foot-cloth, which was supposed to hide the body of the animal, ambled, caracoled, pranced, and plunged, as he performed the celebrated part of the hobby-horse, so often alluded to in our ancient drama; and which still flourishes on the stage in the battle that concludes Bayes's tragedy. To rival the address and agility displayed by this character, another personage advanced, in the more formidable character of a huge dragon, with gilded wings, open jaws, and a scarlet tongue, cloven at the end, which made various efforts to overtake and devour a lad, dressed as the lovely Sabæa, daughter of the King of Egypt, who fled before him; while a martial Saint George, grotesquely armed with a goblet for a helmet, and a spit for a lance, ever and anon interfered, and compelled the monster to relinquish his prey. A bear, a wolf, and one or two other wild animals, played their parts with the discretion of Snug the joiner; for the decided preference which they gave to the use of their hind legs, was sufficient, without

any formal annunciation, to assure the most timorous spectators that they had to do with habitual bipeds. There was a group of outlaws, with Robin Hood and Little John at their head,—the best representation exhibited at the time; and no wonder, since most of the actors were, by profession, the banished men and thieves whom they represented. Other masqueraders there were, of a less marked description. Men were disguised as women, and women as men,—children wore the dress of aged people, and tottered with crutch-sticks in their hands, furred gowns on their little backs, and caps on their round heads, while grandsires assumed the infantine tone as well as the dress of children. Besides these, many had their faces painted, and wore their shirts over the rest of their dress; while coloured pasteboard and ribands furnished out decorations for others. Those who wanted all these properties, blacked their faces, and turned their jackets inside out; and thus the transmutation of the whole assembly into a set of mad grotesque mummers, was at once completed.

The pause which the masqueraders made, waiting apparently for some person of the highest authority amongst them, gave those within the Abbey Church full time to observe all these absurdities. They were at no loss to comprehend their purpose and meaning.

Few readers can be ignorant, that at an early period, and during the plenitude of her power, the Church of Rome not only connived at, but even encouraged, such saturnalian licenses as the inhabitants of Kennaquhair and neighbourhood had now in hand, and that the vulgar, on such occasions, were not only permitted but encouraged, by a number of gambols, sometimes puerile and ludicrous, sometimes immoral and profane, to indemnify themselves for the privations and penances imposed on them at other seasons. But, of all other topics for burlesque and ridi-

cule, the rites and ceremonial of the Church itself were most frequently resorted to; and, strange to say, with the approbation of the clergy themselves.

While the hierarchy flourished in full glory, they do not appear to have dreaded the consequences of suffering the people to become so irreverently familiar with things sacred. They then imagined the laity to be much in the condition of a labourer's horse, which does not submit to the bridle and the whip with greater reluctance, because, at rare intervals, he is allowed to frolic at large in his pasture, and fling out his heels in clumsy gambols at the master who usually drives him. But, when times changed—when doubt of the Roman Catholic doctrine, and hatred of her priesthood, had possessed the Reformed party, the clergy discovered, too late, that no small inconvenience arose from the established practice of games and merry-makings, in which they themselves, and all they held most sacred, were made the subject of ridicule. It then became obvious to duller politicians than the Romish churchmen, that the same actions have a very different tendency when done in the spirit of sarcastic insolence and hatred, than when acted merely in exuberance of rude and uncontrollable spirits. They, therefore, though of the latest, endeavoured, where they had any remaining influence, to discourage the renewal of these indecorous festivities. In this particular, the Catholic clergy were joined by most of the Reformed preachers, who were more shocked at the profanity and immorality of many of these exhibitions, than disposed to profit by the ridiculous light in which they placed the Church of Rome and her observances. But it was long ere these scandalous and immoral sports could be abrogated;—the rude multitude continued attached to their favourite pastimes; and, both in England and Scotland, the mitre of the Catholic—the rochet of the Reformed bishop—and

the cloak and band of the Calvinistic divine—were, in turn, compelled to give place to those jocular personages, the Pope of Fools, the Boy Bishop, and the Abbot of Unreason.

It was the latter personage who now, in full costume, made his approach to the great door of the Church of St. Mary's, accoutred in such a manner as to form a caricature, or practical parody, on the costume and attendants of the real Superior, whom he came to beard on the very day of his installation, in the presence of his clergy, and in the chancel of his church. The mock dignitary was a stout-made under-sized fellow, whose thick squab form had been rendered grotesque by a supplemental paunch, well stuffed. He wore a mitre of leather, with the front like a grenadier's cap, adorned with mock embroidery, and trinkets of tin. This surmounted a visage, the nose of which was the most prominent feature, being of unusual size, and at least as richly gemmed as his head-gear. His robe was of buckram, and his cope of canvass, curiously painted, and cut into open work. On one shoulder was fixed the painted figure of an owl; and he bore in the right hand his pastoral staff, and in the left, a small mirror having a handle to it, thus resembling a celebrated jester, whose adventures, translated into English, were whilom extremely popular, and which may still be procured in black letter, for about one sterling pound per leaf.

The attendants of this mock dignitary had their proper dresses and equipage, bearing the same burlesque resemblance to the officers of the Convent which their leader did to the Superior. They followed their leader in regular procession, and the motley characters, which had waited his arrival, now crowded into the church in his train, shouting as they came,—'A hall, a hall! for the venerable Father Howleglas, the learned Monk of Misrule, and the Right Reverend Abbot of Unreason.'

The discordant minstrelsy of every kind renewed its

din; the boys shrieked and howled, and the men laughed and hallooed, and the women giggled and screamed, and the beasts roared, and the dragon walloped and hissed, and the hobby-horse neighed, pranced, and capered, and the rest frisked and frolicked, clashing their hobnailed shoes against the pavement, till it sparkled with the marks of their energetic caprioles.

It was, in fine, a scene of ridiculous confusion, that deafened the ear, made the eyes giddy, and must have altogether stunned any indifferent spectator. The monks, whom personal apprehension and a consciousness that much of the popular enjoyment arose from the ridicule being directed against them, were, moreover, little comforted by the reflection, that, bold in their disguise, the mummers who whooped and capered around them, might, on slight provocation, turn their jest into earnest, or at least proceed to those practical pleasantries which at all times arise so naturally out of the frolicsome and mischievous disposition of the populace."

This scene, fictitious though it be in the actual personators introduced, conveys a perfectly consistent, and in no degree overdrawn picture of such scenes as frequently occurred, after the Church had begun to regret the license which she had herself encouraged, and to seek, when it was too late, to awake in the minds of the scoffing caricaturists of her haughty pretensions, the superstitious veneration of darker times. Then the utmost license had been deemed safe: the Church, with all her corruptions, was believed to be stably founded on her traditional rock, and all her ancient bulwarks were disappearing when she vainly sought to retrieve this fatal error.

The following is the interesting account of this same singular masquerader of the middle ages, the Abbot of Unreason, which Sir Walter Scott furnishes as an illustration of the subject, derived from authentic historical sources, and accompanied by reflections which fully bear

out the views that have already been expressed in introducing this subject. "We learn," he says, "from no less authority than that of Napoleon Bonaparte, that there is but a single step between the sublime and ridiculous; and it is a transition from one extreme to another, so very easy, that the vulgar of every degree are peculiarly captivated with it. Thus the inclination to laugh becomes uncontrollable, when the solemnity and gravity of time, place, and circumstances, render it peculiarly improper. Some species of general license, like that which inspired the ancient Saturnalia, or the modern Carnival, has been commonly indulged to the people at all times, and in almost all countries. But it was, I think, peculiar to the Roman Catholic Church, that while they studied how to render their church rites imposing and magnificent, by all that pomp, music, architecture, and external display could add to them, they nevertheless connived, upon special occasions, at the frolics of the rude vulgar. In almost all Catholic countries they enjoyed, or at least assumed, the privilege of making some lord of the revels, who, under the name of the Abbot of Unreason, the Boy Bishop, or the President of Fools, occupied the churches, profaned the holy places by a mock imitation of the sacred rites, and sung indecent parodies on hymns of the Church. The indifference of the clergy, even when their power was greatest, to the indecent exhibitions which they always tolerated, and sometimes encouraged, forms a strong contrast to the sensitiveness with which they regarded any serious attempt, by preaching or writing, to impeach any of the doctrines of the Church. It could only be compared to the singular apathy with which they endured, and often admired, the gross novels which Chaucer, Dunbar, Boccaccio, Bandello, and others, composed upon the bad morals of the clergy. It seems as if the churchmen in both instances had endeavoured to compromise with the laity, and allowed them occasionally to gratify their

coarse humour by indecent satire, provided they would abstain from any grave question concerning the foundation of the doctrines on which was erected such an immense fabric of ecclesiastical power.

But the sports thus licensed assumed a very different appearance as soon as the Protestant doctrines began to prevail; and the license which their forefathers had exercised in mere gaiety of heart, and without the least intention of dishonouring religion by their frolics, were now persevered in by the common people as a mode of testifying their utter disregard for the Roman priesthood and their ceremonies.

I may observe, for example, the case of an apparitor sent to Borthwick from the Primate of St. Andrews, to cite the lord of that castle, who was opposed by an Abbot of Unreason, at whose command the officer of the spiritual court was appointed to be ducked in a mill-dam, and obliged to eat up his parchment citation.

The reader may be amused with the following whimsical details of this incident, which took place in the castle of Borthwick, in the year 1547. It appears, that in consequence of a process betwixt Master George Hay de Minzeane and the Lord Borthwick, letters of excommunication had passed against the latter, on account of the contumacy of certain witnesses. William Langlands, an apparitor or macer (*bacularius*) of the see of St. Andrews, presented these letters to the curate of the church of Borthwick, requiring him to publish the same at the service of high mass. It seems that the inhabitants of the castle were at this time engaged in the favourite sport of enacting the Abbot of Unreason, a species of high-jinks in which a mimic prelate was elected, who, like the Lord of Misrule in England, turned all sort of lawful authority, and particularly the Church ritual, into ridicule. This frolicsome person with his retinue, notwithstanding of the apparitor's character, entered the church, seized upon the

primate's officer without hesitation, and, dragging him to the mill-dam on the south side of the castle, compelled him to leap into the water. Not contented with this partial immersion, the Abbot of Unreason pronounced, that Mr. William Langlands was not yet sufficiently bathed, and therefore caused his assistants to lay him on his back in the stream, and duck him in the most satisfactory and perfect manner. The unfortunate apparitor was then conducted back to the church, where, for his refreshment, after his bath, the letters of excommunication were torn to pieces, and steeped in a bowl of wine; the mock Abbot being probably of opinion that a tough parchment was but dry eating, Langlands was compelled to eat the letters, and swallow the wine, and dismissed by the Abbot of Unreason, with the comfortable assurance, that if any more such letters should arrive during the continuance of his office, they should a' gang the same gate, *i. e.* go the same road." Nor should we overlook the game of Robin Hood, frequently mixed up with the former, as already noticed, but which retained its hold on the popular fancy much longer, both in Scotland and England, and defied the efforts of the Reformers to put it down. John Knox gives a very singular account of a riot that took place in Edinburgh in 1561, in consequence of an attempt by the magistrates to stop the apprentices and craftsmen from Robin Hood's play. One of the players was actually condemned to be hanged, and the gallows erected, when he was rescued by his companions, and the magistrates compelled to take refuge from their fury in the Tolbooth, or burgh prison. Fire-arms were used on both sides, and the governor of the Castle had at length to interfere, to liberate the captive magistrates, and to mediate between them and the offended people.

The representation of Robin Hood was no less popular in England than in Scotland. It was the favourite May game of the people, and doubtless the popular revel was

revived at many other seasons, when the Abbot of Misrule, or other frolics of the people, gave them an unusual degree of license. "The Protestant clergy, who had formerly reaped advantage from the opportunities which these sports afforded them of directing their own satire and the ridicule of the lower orders against the Catholic Church, began to find that, when these purposes were served, their favourite pastimes deprived them of the wish to attend divine worship, and disturbed the frame of mind in which it can be attended to advantage. The celebrated Bishop Latimer gives a very *naive* account of the manner in which, bishop as he was, he found himself compelled to give place to Robin Hood and his followers.

'I came once myselfe riding on a journey homeward from London, and I sent word over night into the towne that I would preach there in the morning, because it was holiday, and me thought it was a holidayes worke. The church stood in my way, and I tooke my horse and my company, and went thither, (I thought I should have found a great company in the church,) and when I came there the church doore was fast locked. I tarryed there halfe an houre and more. At last the key was found, and one of the parish comes to me, and said,—'Sir, this is a busie day with us, we cannot hear you; it is Robin Hood's day. The parish are gone abroad to gather for Robin Hood. I pray you let them not.' I was faine there to give place to Robin Hood. I thought my rochet should have been regarded, though I were not; but it would not serve, it was faine to give place to Robin Hood's men. It is no laughing matter, my friends, it is a weeping matter, a heavie matter, a heavie matter. Under the pretence for gathering for Robin Hood, a traytour, and a thief, to put out a preacher; to have his office lesse esteemed; to preferre Robin Hood before the ministration of God's word; and all this hath come of unpreaching prelates. This realme hath been ill provided for, that it hath had such

corrupt judgements in it, to prefer Robin Hood to God's word.' "

Thus was this frolic of the Outlaw's pageant deemed of more moment by the people of England, at the very era of the Reformation, than the preaching of this excellent and most popular Bishop. Though it cannot excite much surprise in our mind that it should be so. We can only reflect on it that truth has this great advantage over falsehood and pretence, that however it may be set aside for a time by the profane jesting of the scoffer, or the thoughtless ridicule of the fool, it retains its pristine beauty unimpaired, and re-appears pure and indestructible as ever. It is hypocrisy that has to dread the assaults of ridicule, which frequently lead the most thoughtless to see behind its painted mask, and discern its hollowness and falsehood.

CHAPTER III.

GRAVE SATIRISTS.

Among the great writers who guided the awakening mind of Europe in the thirteenth century, none was more earnest than the author of the "Divina Comedia,"— the immortal Dante. His influence was peculiarly important, for he was the first great writer who abjured the classic tongues, and wrote in his own native language the burning words of his mighty poem. He wrote in the thirteenth century, while nearly all Europe lay sunk in ignorance and superstitious blindness, nor was he free from the influence of the perverted creed of the corrupt Church of Rome. Yet he struck a great and effectual blow at its infallible assumptions, at the very time when the Supreme Pontiff seemed indeed the representative and

vicegerent of God,—the holder of the keys of heaven and hell.

Dante, in his immortal poem, represents himself as guided by spiritual messengers through the glories and the horrors of the unseen world, and in the regions of eternal woe he beholds priests, monks, cardinals, and popes, all suffering the punishment due to crimes committed in the body; crimes which the enslaved and prostrate world had hitherto seen as with averted eyes, not daring to notice, much less to regard as amenable to future punishment, the iniquities of those whom they deemed the ambassadors of heaven.

In the nineteenth Canto of the first part of his great poem, Dante is conducted by Virgil into the third gulf of hell, and there he finds Pope Nicholas the Fifth enduring the sufferings so justly merited by his many crimes. Dante takes occasion from this to contrast the avarice and turpitude of those who claimed to be the successors of St. Peter, with the character of Christ's Apostles; and then he anticipates Luther in the conviction, which only broke upon his mind more than a century after the great Italian had been laid in his grave, that the mystery of iniquity foreshadowed in the apocalyptic visions of the Apostle John, was none other than that which "sat in the temple of God, as God," in the Roman capital.

After bidding the adjudged pontiff abide his justly merited doom, he says:—

"Your avarice
O'ercasts the world with mourning, under foot
Treading the good, and raising bad men up.
Of shepherds like to you, the Evangelist
Was ware, when her who sits upon the waves,
With kings in filthy whoredom he beheld;
She who with seven heads towered at her birth,
And from ten horns her proof of glory drew,
Long as her spouse in virtue took delight.
Of gold and silver ye have made your god,
Differing wherein from the idolater,
But that he worships one, a hundred ye?

> Ah, Constantine! to how much ill gave birth,
> Not thy conversion, but that plenteous dower,
> Which the first wealthy father gained from thee!"

Here we have the Pope, whom the world was then taught to believe in as the infallible successor of St. Peter, and the holder of the keys of heaven and hell, doomed not to the purifying flames of purgatory, but to the place of eternal woe. Such teaching clearly struck at the very root of papal infallibility, and though it slowly worked out its full effect, it undoubtedly exercised a most important influence on the minds of his successors, and prepared the way for Boccaccio's humorous tales, which exposed with such merciless severity and sarcasm the vices and the ignorance of the friars. Graver writers followed the example of the latter, and exposed to the world not only the crimes of those who were leading them blindly into the toils of superstition, but their utter scepticism; so that the popes and clergy of the fifteenth century were knowingly teaching them to believe a lie.

"John Francis Pico, nephew of Pico of Mirandola, speaks of one pope who did not believe in God; and of another who, having acknowledged to a friend his disbelief in the immortality of the soul, appeared to him one night after death, and said: 'Alas! the eternal fire that is now consuming me makes me feel but too sensibly the immortality of that soul which I had thought would die with the body!' This may remind us of those remarkable words spoken, it is asserted, by Leo the Tenth to his secretary Bembo: 'Every age knows how useful this fable of Christ has been to us and ours'.... Contemptible superstitions were attacked, but incredulity with its disdainful and mocking sneer was set up in their place. To laugh at every thing, even at what was most holy, was the fashion and the badge of a freethinker. Religion was considered only as a means of governing the world. 'I fear,' says

Erasmus in 1516, 'that with the study of ancient literature, the olden paganism will re-appear.'"

Erasmus followed the same example, and assaulted the corrupt Church with the weapons both of grave learning and pungent sarcasm. D'Aubigné has thus exhibited this feature of the Dutch philosopher's life and character in his History of the Reformation:—

"Erasmus, in fact, attacked the monks and the prevailing abuses in two ways. He first adopted a popular method. This fair little man, whose half-closed blue eyes keenly observed all that was passing,—on whose lips was ever a slight sarcastic smile,—whose manner was timid and embarrassed,—and whom, it seemed, that a puff of wind would blow down,—scattered in every direction his elegant and biting sarcasms against the theology and devotion of his age. His natural character and the events of his life had rendered this disposition habitual. Even in those writings where we should have least expected it, his sarcastic humour suddenly breaks out, and he immolated, as with needle-points, those schoolmen and those ignorant monks against whom he had declared war. There are many points of resemblance between Voltaire and Erasmus. Preceding authors had already popularized the idea of that element of folly which has crept into all the opinions and actions of human life. Erasmus seized upon it, and introduced Folly in her own person, *Moria*, daughter of Plutus, born in the Fortunate Isles, fed on drunkenness and impertinence, and queen of a powerful empire. She gives a description of it. She depicts successively all the states in the world that belong to her, but she dwells particularly on the churchmen, who will not acknowledge her benefits, though she loads them with her favours. She overwhelms with her gibes and sarcasms that labyrinth of dialectics in which the theologians had bewildered themselves, and those extravagant syllogisms, by which they pretended to support the Church. She unveils the

disorders, ignorance, filthy habits, and absurdities of the monks.

'They all belong to me,' says she, 'those folks whose greatest pleasure is in relating miracles, or listening to marvellous lies, and who make use of them in an especial manner to beguile the dulness of others, and to fill their own purses, (I speak particularly of priests and preachers!) In the same category are those who enjoy the foolish but sweet persuasion that if they chance to see a piece of wood or picture representing Polyphemus or Christopher, they will not die that day.'

'Alas! what follies,' continues Moria; 'I am almost ashamed of them myself! Do we not see every country claiming its peculiar *saint?* Each trouble has its saint, and every saint his candle. This cures the toothach; that assists women in childbed; a third restores what a thief has stolen; a fourth preserves you in shipwreck; and a fifth protects your flocks. There are some who have many virtues at once, and especially the Virgin-mother of God, in whom the people place more confidence than in her Son..... If in the midst of all these mummeries some wise man should rise and give utterance to these harsh truths: 'You shall not perish miserably if you live like Christians;—you shall redeem your sins, if to your alms you add repentance, tears, watchings, prayer, fasting, and a complete change in your way of life;—this saint will protect you, if you imitate his conduct;'—If, I say, some wise man should charitably utter these things in their ears, oh! of what happiness would he not rob their souls, and into what trouble, what distress would he not plunge them!.... The mind of man is so constituted that imposture has more hold upon it than truth. If there is one saint more apocryphal than another—a St. George, St. Christopher, or St. Barbara—you will see him worshipped with greater fervency than St. Peter, St. Paul, or even than Christ himself.'

But Moria does not stop here: she attacks the bishops 'who run more after gold than after souls, and who think they have done enough for Jesus Christ, when they take their seats complacently and with theatrical pomp, like holy fathers to whom adoration belongs, and utter blessings or anathemas.' The daughter of the Fortunate Isles even ventures to attack the court of Rome and the Pope himself, who, passing his time in amusements, leaves the duties of his ministry to St. Peter and St. Paul. 'Can there be any greater enemies to the Church than these unholy pontiffs, who by their silence allow Jesus Christ to be forgotten; who bind him by their mercenary regulations; who falsify his doctrine by forced interpretations; and crucify him a second time by their scandalous lives?'

Holbein added the most grotesque illustrations to the Praise of Folly, in which the Pope figured with his triple crown. Perhaps no work has ever been so thoroughly adapted to the wants of the age. It is impossible to describe the impression this little book produced throughout Christendom. Twenty-seven editions appeared in the lifetime of Erasmus: it was translated into every European language, and contributed more than any other to confirm the anti-sacerdotal tendency of the age."

Similar in style and influence to these writings was the famous German satire entitled "*The Letters of Obscure Men.*" The principal authors of the collection were Ulrich of Hütten, and Crotus Robianus, one of his college friends. The monks, the supposed writers of the letters, are represented as corresponding with a celebrated professor of Cologne, to whom they address the silliest questions, and apparently in perfect unconsciousness, expose their superstitious credulity and vice; while in their own ignorant fashion they discuss the important theological questions which were then occupying so large a share in the minds of the most learned and virtuous men of Europe. "With the most artless simplicity they betray their gross

ance, incredulity, and superstition; their low and vulgar spirit; the coarse gluttony by which they make a god of their bellies; and at the same time their pride, and fanatical and persecuting zeal. They relate many of their droll adventures, of their excesses and profligacy, with various scandalous incidents in the lives of Hochstraten, Pfefferkorn, and other chiefs of their party. The tone of these letters—at one time hypocritical, at another quite childish—gives them a very comic effect: and yet the whole is so natural, that the English Dominicans and Franciscans received the work with the greatest approbation, and thought it really composed on the principles and in the defence of their orders. A certain prior of Brabant. in his credulous simplicity, even purchased a great number of copies, and sent them as presents to the most distinguished of the Dominicans. The monks, more and more exasperated, applied to the Pope for a severe bull against all who should dare to read these letters; but Leo the Tenth would not grant their request. They were forced to bear with the general ridicule, and to smother their anger. No work ever inflicted a more terrible blow on these supporters of the Papacy."

Luther complained of the abusive style in which many parts of this work were written, and condemned it as the composition of an ill-regulated mind. Nevertheless there can be no question of its beneficial influence. It dealt indeed in abusive language, but it was in dealing with gross abuses, and it expressed bold and most unpalatable truths regarding the monks in a style and form peculiarly acceptable to the people. The rotten foundations of the corrupt Church trembled and gave way before such coarse but well-directed missiles. The Gospel indeed owed its triumph to very different causes, but these also helped to pave the way.

It is strange, however, how little influence all this had in leading the clergy even to greater circumspection and

outward decency of conduct. All this preceded the pontificate of Leo the Tenth and Tetzel's sale of indulgences, which so effectually promoted the Reformation. One familiar example of this will suffice:—"Tetzel had set up the red cross of the indulgences at Zwickau, and the worthy parishioners had hastened to drop into his strong-box the money that would deliver them. He was about to leave with a well-stored purse, when, on the eve of his departure, the chaplains and their acolytes asked him for a farewell supper. The request was just. But how contrive it? The money was already counted and sealed up. On the morrow he caused the great bell to be tolled. The crowd rushed into the church; each one imagined something extraordinary had happened, seeing that the business was over. 'I had resolved,' said he, 'to depart this morning; but last night I was awakened by groans. I listened attentively......they came from the cemetery...... Alas! it was some poor soul calling upon me, and earnestly entreating me to deliver it from the torments by which it is consumed! I shall stay, therefore, one day longer, in order to move the compassion of all Christian hearts in favour of this unhappy soul. I myself will be the first to give, and he that does not follow my example will merit condemnation. What heart would not have replied to this appeal? Who knows, besides, what soul it is thus crying from the cemetery?' The offerings were abundant, and Tetzel entertained the chaplains and their acolytes with a joyous repast, the expense of which was defrayed by the contributions given in behalf of the soul of Zwickau."

One more example, while it strikingly illustrates the same shameless venality, is a satisfactory instance of the triumph of common sense over the gross superstitions thus unblushingly taught. "A Saxon nobleman, who had heard Tetzel at Leipsic, was much displeased by his falsehoods. Approaching the monk, he asked him if he had the power of pardoning sins that men have an intention

of committing. 'Most assuredly,' replied Tetzel, 'I have received full powers from his Holiness for that purpose.' 'Well, then,' answered the knight, 'I am desirous of taking a slight revenge on one of my enemies, without endangering his life. I will give you ten crowns if you will give me a letter of indulgence that shall fully justify me.' Tetzel made some objections; they came, however, to an arrangement by the aid of thirty crowns. The monk quitted Leipsic shortly after. The nobleman and his attendants lay in wait for him in a wood between Jüterbock and Treblin; they fell upon him, gave him a beating, and took away the well-stored indulgence chest the inquisitor was carrying with him. Tetzel made a violent outcry, and carried his complaint before the courts. But the nobleman showed the letter which Tetzel had signed himself, and which exempted him beforehand from every penalty. Duke George, whom this action had at first exceedingly exasperated, no sooner read the document than he ordered the accused to be acquitted."

Thus did Tetzel exhibit in his own proceedings how much truth surpasses the most truthful fiction, and himself excel the most pungent satirist in exposing the gross profligacy of the priesthood. The shameless agent of papal vice thereby became unwittingly a pioneer of the Reformation, and a most effective agent in its triumph.

CHAPTER IV.

ENGLISH SATIRISTS.

THE Reformation in England was seconded by the same class of satiric auxiliaries as we have described in its history in Germany and Italy; with no less zealous literary coadjutors of greater earnestness of purpose. The famous

"Vision of Piers Ploughman," a poetical work of the fourteenth century, of great merit, is one of the earliest and most remarkable of the latter class. It had been frequently transcribed, and enjoyed a high popularity long before the printing of the earliest edition in 1550. The author, Robert Langland, as he is generally called,—though the Latin title of the poem seems to leave no doubt that his name was William,—is believed to have been a monk. He appears, from the allusions in his poems, to have resided in the west of England, near the Malvern Hills, where he introduces himself at the commencement of his poem as falling asleep on a May morning, much in the same style as the more celebrated dreamer of Bedford jail. From some allusions to remarkable occurrences in the fourteenth century which appear in the vision, it has been assumed, with much probability, that this poem was written about the year 1362. It is an allegory exhibiting the vicissitudes that beset our mortal career, constructed on the same general idea as Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, but composed with much more satirical humour than the latter dreamer admitted into his vision.

There can be no doubt that the author of Piers Ploughman's Vision was a follower of Wycliffe. His poem abounds with the same exposures of monks, pardoners, and pilgrims, as have been frequently alluded to in the previous chapters:—

> "Pilgrims and palmers
> Going forth together,
> For to seeken Saint Jame
> And Saintes of Rome:
> They wenten forth on their way
> With many wise tales,
> And had then leave to lie
> All their life after."

We have considerably modernized the language, to make it readily intelligible to the general reader; but this

curious poem is well worthy the labour of perusing in its rough old Saxon vernacular.

Of our own noble Chaucer, and his Canterbury Pilgrimage, less we trust need be said, as his fine flowing verse is again becoming the subject of study which it so well deserves; and his countrymen are anew discovering that the name of Geoffrey Chaucer deserves to rank with those of Spenser, Shakspeare, and Milton, not because he was one of the earliest, but because he is still one of the greatest of our poets. His description of the Mendicant Friar in the Pilgrimage, is as keen a piece of lively satire as ever was penned. The burly, wanton friar, mirthful or solemn as suited his purpose, pleasant and easy in his absolution when "he wist to have a good pittance;" and one

> "Who had a merry note;
> Thereto he strong was as a champion,
> And knew well the taverns in every town,
> And every hosteler and gay tapstere,
> Better than a lazar or a beggere."

Numerous pictures, drawn with a still freer hand, might be extracted from the pages of this noble poet, whose writings, it cannot be questioned, exercised a lasting influence on the popular mind.

The same period in which Chaucer and his contemporary Gower issued their great works in England, is also the era of the birth of Scottish poetry. The subject, however, adopted by Barbour—that of The Bruce—though invaluable as a contribution to our national literature, has little bearing on the present subject. It was not till Dunbar appeared, the noblest of Scotland's poets, master alike of serious and comic song, that we find the vices and follies of the Church again subjected to the lash of the satirist.

From these eminent writers who have influenced the character of our national literature, we turn again to the ruder and more popular strains, which though less last-

ing, are generally more powerful in their influence for a time. Both in the reign of Henry the Eighth and that of his pious son Edward, the popular mind was sought to be influenced by ballads and other slight productions suited to the times. The name of one writer, Gray, has been handed down to us as one who specially acquired the favour of Henry the Eighth, and afterwards of the Protector Somerset, by making "certaine merrie ballades." To Cromwell, Earl of Essex, however, this scheme is most probably to be ascribed, as best suited to his daring, and not very sensitive mind. He it was who mainly promoted the general visitation of the monasteries, the result of which is thus described by Tytler:—"Cromwell being appointed to superintend this duty, despatched his emissaries, Layton, Leigh, and Detre, doctors of law, with London, Dean of Wallingford, to make inquiry into the condition of the convents at large. Their instructions were ample, directing them to investigate, in the strictest manner, the government, education, and behaviour of persons of both sexes,—to find out all their offences,—and, with this object, to encourage them in accusing both their governors and each other,—to compel them to exhibit their mortmains, evidences, and conveyances of land,—to discover their jewels and relics,—and to take inventories of their plate and money. In addition to this, injunctions were given for the better regulation and government of those houses, and for the acknowledgment of the King's supremacy by every religious order in the kingdom. The result of this investigation, pursued at different times, was the disclosure of such a system of imposture, and the detection of so much immorality in the lives of the pretended devotees, who had been long secluded from observation, that nothing short of a total dissolution of the monasteries appeared likely to remove the evil. The machinery of the pretended miracles, by which the poor and ignorant people were abused, was, in many places,

laid open in a striking manner. At Boxley, in Kent, for example, there was found a crucifix which, by the pulling of certain wires, was made sometimes to move its head and eyes, sometimes to incline its body, as if in the act of receiving prayers; whilst, by a different mechanism, those gestures were imitated which might be interpreted into a rejection of them. Many and great were the offerings which, for a long period, the ignorant devotion of pilgrims had presented to this image; but the imposition having been detected, and the internal construction exposed, it was commanded to be destroyed. At Hales, in the county of Gloucester, a liquid, which the priests declared to be the blood of our Saviour, was shown in a phial of crystal, which the people sometimes were able, and sometimes unable to see. On investigation, it was found out that they were made to believe that they could not be blessed with a sight of the sacred substance as long as they continued in mortal sin, even when the phial was placed immediately before their eyes, and they continued therefore to make offerings till heaven was said to relent and give them a view of this holy relic. Upon minute examination, it was discovered that the blood enclosed in the phial was nothing more than that of a duck, which was renewed every week; that one side of the vessel was thick and opaque, and the other side thin and transparent: it was placed in such a manner upon the altar, that a person concealed behind could turn either the one side or the other to the spectators. The whole was an impudent contrivance to drain those who came to see it of as much money as possible; after which, the credulous votaries were made happy by having the transparent side turned towards them. Many of these superstitious images were publicly exposed, and afterwards destroyed at St. Paul's Cross; whilst a great number of pretended relics were discovered in different parts of the kingdom."

This was a sufficiently powerful lesson for the people,

and no doubt fully prepared them to relish Gray's "Merrie Ballades." The most vigorous and popular of these, is that known as "*Huntis up*," an ingenious and bold allegory of the power and evil influence of the Pope. It runs as follows:—

"With huntis up, with huntis up,
It is now perfect day;
Jesus our king is gone a-hunting,
Who likes to speed, they may.

Ane cursed fox lay hid in rocks
This lóng and many a day,
Devouring sheep, while he might creep;
None might him 'scape away.

It did him good to lap the blood
Of young and tender lambs:
None could him miss; for all was his,
The young ones with their dams.

The hunter is Christ, that hunts in haste;
The hounds are Peter and Paul;
The Pope is the fox; Rome is the rocks,
That rubs us on the gall.

That cruel beast, he never ceased,
By his usurped power,
Under dispence, to get our pence,
Our souls to devour.

Who could devise such merchandise
As he had there to sell,
Unless it were proud Lucifer,
The great master of hell?

He had to sell the Tantonie bell,
And pardons therein was,
Remission of sins in old sheep-skins,
Our souls to bring from grace.

With bulls of lead, white wax and red,
And other whiles with green,
Closed in a box; this used the fox;
Such paultrie was never seen."

This we may conceive sung through the streets of London, and in the villages and hamlets of England, and exercising a most powerful influence in freeing the popular mind from the trammels of superstition, by leading them to despise what they had blindly feared. The ready acceptation which such pieces met with soon led to their multiplication. The minstrel told in graphic verse the scenes which he witnessed among the monks and pardoners that played so prominent a part in the social economy of his time, and the people first smiled at their humour, and then thought more seriously of the lessons which such exposures contained. Several curious examples are preserved in Percy's Reliques, one of the best of which is entitled, "A Ballad of Luther, the Pope, a Cardinal, and a Husbandman." It is constructed in a dramatic form, and the husbandman first speaks:—

> "Let us lift up our heartés all,
> And praise the Lord's magnificence,
> Which hath given the wolves a fall,
> And is become our strong defence:
> For they through a false pretence
> From Christe's blood did all us lead,
> Getting from every man his pence
> As satisfactours for the dead."

After further discourse on the friars "who played the merchauntes with our souls," Doctor Martin Luther takes up the theme of antichrist in very characteristic language; and the Cardinal and Pope reply in their own fashion. The Pope, for example, exclaims:—

> "As for Scripture, I am above it;
> Am not I God's high vicare?
> Should I be bound to follow it,
> As the carpenter his ruler?
> Nay, nay, heretics ye are,
> That will not obey my authoritie,
> With this SWORD I will declare
> That ye shall all accursed be."

Numerous similar examples might be quoted, but these will suffice to illustrate this peculiar feature of the period we have entitled the Dawn of the Reformation.

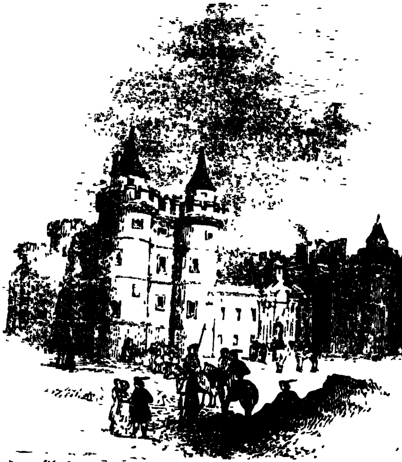
It remains to be considered how far such instruments were worthy of the cause. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal but spiritual," is the language of all the true soldiers of Christ; and the same test must be applied to these, as to every other means employed to work the overthrow of error. The disciples of truth can never be justified in doing evil that good may come; but it cannot escape the observation of the most casual student of history, that nearly all those assaults which so powerfully and unexpectedly shook the power of Rome, and which we have designated as the "Pasquils of the Reformation," originated without the countenance or sanction of the Reformers, while many of them received their decided condemnation. Luther exclaimed, on seeing the ferment produced by the famous "Letters of Illiterate Men," that it was not by such means the cause of truth was to be advanced.

True indeed, earnest seekers after truth, longing for that sure and certain hope, which they attained alone through the glorious doctrine of Justification by Faith in Christ, were little likely to assail their adversaries with the impure tales of Boccaccio, or the humorous ballads of the Troubadours and minstrels. Nevertheless, God, in his providence, made these the instruments for awakening in the minds of thousands convictions of the falseness of the apostate Church, and its impious pretensions.

It was meet that the faith of men in that refuge of lies should be shaken by such weak instruments, that the power and nobleness of God's own truth might be the more manifest in its simplicity, when he raised up his servants, the great apostles of the Reformation.

JOHN CRAIG,

SCOTTISH DOMINICAN.



Holyrood Palace

TOWARDS the close of the year 1572 rumours of approaching war had penetrated to every valley of Scotland, and excited to hope, or ambition, or fear, the minds of its hardy and warlike people. The troubled reign of the weak and arbitrary monarch, James the Third, had at length been violently brought to a close by his exasperated nobles, and his young son was immediately thereafter invested with the royal dignity at Scone. This event occurred in the year 1488, and however lawless the means may have been which the

nobles adopted to free themselves from the vacillating tyranny of royalty, the nation at large speedily appreciated the benefit of the change. Scotland never experienced, throughout the long history of its independence, the same happiness and generous loyalty between prince and people, as that which characterized the brief reign of James the Fourth. He was, without doubt, the most eminent monarch at that time in Europe. The patron of learning, the friend of his nobles, and the benefactor of his people, he elevated Scotland to a high rank among the nations, and attracted to his court the most eminent men from other kingdoms; while, in his own household, or attendant on his person, were men of learning, whose names still rank among the highest in the annals of her earlier literature.

One of the biographers of this monarch remarks of him: - "James possessed in an eminent degree every quality necessary to render a sovereign beloved by his subjects; and perhaps no prince ever enjoyed so large a portion of personal regard, of intense affection, as did James the Fourth of Scotland. His manner was gentle and affable to all who came in contact with him, whatever might be their rank or degree. He was just and impartial in his decrees, yet never inflicted punishment without strong and visible reluctance. He listened willingly and readily to admonition, and never discovered either impatience or resentment while his errors were placed before him. He took everything in good part, and endeavoured to amend the faults pointed out by his adv ers. He was generous, even to a fault; magnificent and princely in all his habits, pursuits, and amusements. His mind was acute, and dignified, and noble. He excelled in all warlike exercises and manly accomplishments; in music, horsemanship, and the use of sword and spear. Nor was his personal appearance at variance with this elevated character. His form, which was of the middle size, was exceedingly

handsome, yet stout and muscular, and his countenance had an expression of mildness and dignity, that instantly predisposed all who looked upon it to a strong attachment to its possessor."

Again, it is remarked of him at a later period:—"The Prince and his nobles placed the most implicit confidence in each other, and the people in both. This good understanding with the former, the King encouraged and promoted, by inviting them to frequent tournaments and other amusements and warlike exercises, in accordance with his own chivalrous spirit, and adapted to their rude tastes and habits. These tournaments were exceedingly splendid, and were invested with all the romance of the brightest days of chivalry. Ladies, lords, and knights, in the most gorgeous attire, crowded round the lists, or from draperied balconies witnessed the combats that took place within them. James himself always presided on these occasions, and often exhibited his own prowess in the lists; and there were few who could successfully compete with him with spear, sword, or battle-axe. Stranger knights from distant countries, attracted by the chivalric fame of the Scottish court, frequently attended and took part in these tournaments, but, it is said, did not in many instances prove themselves better men at their weapons than the Scottish knights. One of the rules of these encounters was, that the victor should be put in possession of his opponent's weapon; but when this was a spear, a purse of gold, a gift from the King, was attached to the point of it. These trophies were delivered to the conqueror by the monarch himself. The people were delighted with these magnificent and warlike exhibitions, and with their generous and chivalrous author. Nor were the actors themselves, the nobles, less gratified with them, or less affected by the high and princely spirit whence they emanated. They brought them into frequent and familiar contact with their sovereign, and nothing more was necessary in the case of James,

to attach them warmly and devotedly to his person. His kind and affable manner accomplished the rest.

By such means, he was not only without a single enemy amongst the aristocracy, but all of them would have shed the last drop of their blood in his defence, and a day came when nearly all of them did so. In short, the wisest policy could not have done more in uniting the affections of prince and peers, than was accomplished by those war-like pastimes, aided as they were by the amiable manners of the monarch.

Not satisfied with discharging his duty to his subjects, from his high place on the throne, James frequently descended, and, disguising his person—a practice to which his successor was also much addicted—roamed through the country unarmed and unattended, inquiring into his own reputation amongst the common people, and endeavouring to learn what faults himself or his government were charged with. On these occasions he lodged in the meanest hovels, and encouraged the inmates to speak their minds freely regarding their king; and there is little doubt, that, as his conduct certainly merited it, so he must have been frequently gratified by their replies."

Such was the character of the Scottish monarch, a ruler in every way formed to engage the affections of his people. His errors, however, sprung from the same source as some of his virtues. He was impetuous in all his actions, and, while he was unquestionably the most chivalrous prince of his time in Europe, this quality, which was then so highly esteemed, when allied to the natural rashness to which he was prone, at length led to his own overthrow, and a most disastrous end of the happiness his people had experienced under his rule.

The throne of England was at this time occupied by the wary and prudent monarch, Henry the Seventh. A long protracted civil war—the famous wars of the roses—had been brought to a close by his accession to the throne, and

he was more bent on consolidating his power, and enriching his treasury, than on seeking for barren laurels in the tented field. By his wary policy war was averted, even when James's rash and impetuous disposition had led him into unprovoked hostilities with the old southern foe. Henry was resolved by all means to secure for himself a friendly ally in his Scottish rival, and this was at length secured by means of a matrimonial alliance, which, notwithstanding most disastrous scenes that intervened, at length united the crowns of these old rival kingdoms, in the person of James's great-grandson, the sixth of the name. This auspicious union took place in 1503, and the great Scottish poet, Dunbar, who was then a close attendant on James, and employed by him in the most confidential missions, has celebrated the royal marriage in his beautiful allegorical poem of "the Thistle and the Rose." One of the stipulations of the marriage-treaty secured, as might be expected, an inviolable peace between the two kingdoms, which lasted for upwards of nine years, during which the nation enjoyed all the blessings of peace under a just and wise ruler. James occupied himself during this period in introducing many salutary improvements into the civil policy of his kingdom, in which he received the hearty co-operation of his nobles. But, meanwhile, Henry the Seventh died, and the accession of his son to the English throne greatly altered the natural relations of the rival kingdoms. Jealousies and mutual offences speedily occurred, until, at length, war was proclaimed between the two nations, and both monarchs engaged in the most formidable preparations for taking the field at the head of an overwhelming force.

James summoned, according to ancient custom, the whole array of the kingdom to muster on the Borough Muir, near Edinburgh, within twenty days; and nothing so markedly exhibits the popularity and influence of the Scottish monarch as the fact, that he was able to march

at the head of an immense army, with nearly the whole of the nobles and their retainers, although, at the very time, the former were using their utmost influence to dissuade him from the contest. The people were well content to remain in the enjoyment of those tranquil fruits of a peaceful and prosperous reign, which had spread happiness and plenty through the vales and hamlets, and had filled the ports of the kingdom with their own and their allies' ships, while the Scottish capital had burst the bonds of its ancient walls, and had nearly doubled its size during that reign.

The singular incidents that occurred at this period are particularly worthy of notice, as marking the superstitious character of the age. The King, although only a youth of sixteen, at the time of his father's death on the field of Stirling, had accompanied the insurgent nobles, and been present at the struggle in which he perished. He ever afterwards looked back with remorse on his share in an act which involved his father's violent death, and, in addition to occasional periods devoted to fasting and penitential prayers, he always wore round his waist an iron girdle, as a perpetual penance and atonement for his crime. When the Scottish nobles found that James was bent upon risking the safety of his kingdom by war with England, and that all dissuasions were unavailing, they resolved to work on his superstitious fears, hoping thereby to win him from his rash purpose. One of the most remarkable occurrences consequent on this, took place in the beautiful old church which still stands at Linlithgow, where, according to the historians of the period, a spectre, generally believed to have been the apostle John, suddenly appeared before the King, as he knelt at his devotions, surrounded by his nobles and courtiers, and warned him of his fate, if he persisted in his dangerous and fatal purpose. This, and other supernatural occurrences, at this period, are narrated by contemporary historians, with a minuteness and seeming

good faith, that forbids their being reckoned as mere fanciful or traditionary legends. They have been universally ascribed to the efforts of Queen Margaret, and the chief nobles of the kingdom, to divert the King from his headstrong determination for war.

The following is the simple narrative of this strange occurrence, as related by Lindsay of Pitscottie, a contemporary historian. As a key to the state of superstitious credulity which generally prevailed in Scotland at this period, immediately prior to the Reformation in the neighbouring kingdom, it is possessed of much interest, and will prepare the reader for marking the great changes that succeeded.

"The King came to Linlithgow, where he happened to be for the time at the Council, very sad and dolorous, making his devotion to God to send him good chance and fortune in his undertaking. In this meantime, there came in at the kirk door, a man clad in a blue gown, and belted about with a roll of linen cloth, a pair of boots on his feet, with all other clothes conformable thereto. He had no covering on his head, but only long yellow hair which hung down his shoulders, while his forehead was bald and bare. He seemed to be a man of two-and-fifty years, with a great pike-staff in his hand. He came forward among the lords, loudly demanding to see the King, as he desired to speak with him. At the last he came to where the King was sitting in the desk at his prayers; but when he saw the King he made him little reverence or salutation, but leaned down on the desk before him, and said to him on this manner:—'Sir King! my mother hath sent me to thee, desiring thee not to pass at this time where thou art purposed; for if thou dost thou wilt not fare well in thy journey, nor none that pass with thee.'

By the time the man had spoken these words unto the King's grace, the evening song was near done, and the King paused on his words, studying to give an answer;

but, in the meantime, before the King's eyes, and in presence of all the lords that were about him, this man vanished away, and could no ways be seen nor comprehended, but vanished away as he had been a blink of the sun, or a whip of the whirlwind, and could no more be seen. I heard say, Sir David Lindsay, lyon-herald, and John Inglis, the marshal, who were at that time young men, and special servants to the King's grace, were standing presently beside the King, and thought to have laid hands on this man, that they might have asked further tidings at him, but all for nought; they could not touch him, for he vanished away betwixt them, and was no more seen."

We have no account of the King's bearing while thus appealed to by the supposed emissary of Heaven, but whether he suspected the device of his courtiers, or was so bent on his purpose that he defied his fate, it is certain that this occurrence in no way retarded the preparations for war.

The same old historian has furnished a no less lively and interesting account of the supernatural occurrences that were witnessed at the Scotch capital, on the King's removal thither preparatory to his marching to the borders; and which, no doubt, owed their origin to the same source. According to him, ghostly heralds appeared at midnight on the ancient market cross of Edinburgh, and summoned by name the Scottish king and nobles to appear within three days in the unseen world, from whence their summoners had come. One citizen, the historian tells us, hearing his own name pronounced by these dread heralds, threw down a crown-piece, according to the custom of the age, and appealed from their summons and judgment to the mercy of God; and he adds, "after the field, there was not a man that was called at that time escaped, except that one man that appealed from their judgment."

The news of the disastrous field of Flodden spread dismay and mourning throughout the kingdom. A widowed

Queen, and an orphan boy, to wear the crown thus left vacant by the death of the rash monarch who had madly rushed to his fate, were only the most eminent examples of the desolation that had spread far throughout the castles and the cottages of the land. Scarcely a single noble family exists in Scotland, whose genealogical tree does not bear the name of one or more of the victims of that fatal field; while the ancient ballads and legendary tales of the peasantry bear witness to the deep impression it left on the popular mind.

Its influence on the future history of the nation was great. It undoubtedly retarded civilization, and put a stop to many valuable social improvements. It was no less felt in numerous family circles, as the source of their bereavement; robbing them of father and sons, and, thereby, shaping more waywardly the devious course of life to younger survivors. It will now be our subject, in future chapters, to follow the eventful track of one of these, the orphans of Flodden Field.

CHAPTER II.

THE SCHOLAR.

JOHN CRAIG, the subject of this memoir, was born in the year 1512. He is believed to have been descended of a good family. One of his ancestors, John Craig, a brave and gallant soldier, was the captain of Kildrummy Castle in the reign of David the Second of Scotland. On the approach of a hostile army, commanded by Edward Baliol, he held the castle against the invaders till the advance of the King's forces, commanded by Robert, Lord High Steward, and John Randolph, Earl Moray, who immediately joined battle with the besiegers, and a fierce and bloody fray ensued. The contest was long maintained

with equal courage by both parties, and the issue remained still doubtful, when Craig sallied forth at the head of his garrison, and assaulted the enemy with such resolute valour, that they gave way on every hand. They were totally overthrown, many of their leaders slain or taken prisoners, and the royal forces remained masters of the field. In the same spirit of courageous loyalty, his descendant followed the royal banners to the fatal field of Flodden, and perished there, with his sovereign, and the flower of the Scottish army, leaving his infant son, then only a year old. This event, which thus left young Craig so early an orphan, was, in all probability, the ultimate cause of his destination for the cloisters and the priesthood. He showed himself in after life a man of great courage, energy, and perseverance, and, under more auspicious circumstances, he would, in all probability, have followed the heroic example of his brave ancestors, and served, like his father, under the royal banner.

The long minority that ensued after the death of James the Fourth, and the anarchy and misery that prevailed until his son assumed the government in his own person, overturned all the prosperity and increasing civilization that had attended on the wise reign of that monarch. The circumstances of the young orphan were materially affected thereby; he had to submit to many hardships, and found his course beset by difficulties that demanded all his courage and perseverance to surmount. Nevertheless, he early gave promise of abilities of no ordinary nature. He availed himself of every means of obtaining knowledge that came within his reach, and succeeded in mastering the chief acquirements that then attracted the study of scholars. The period in which young Craig pursued his studies, was an era of great and very general cultivation of learning throughout Scotland. Walter Chepman, the celebrated typographer, who first introduced the art of printing in Scotland, was a wealthy burgess of

Edinburgh, and one of the royal household of James the Fourth. The King had exerted his utmost zeal in promoting the introduction and encouragement of this valuable art. In accordance with his urgent wishes, the printing-press was established at Edinburgh. Chepman was associated with Andrew Millar, a wealthy merchant, in its exclusive use; and a royal grant, under the privy seal, secured them in the rights and privileges of the new art. From this first Scottish press the poems of Dunbar and Kennedy speedily issued, as well as other works of various characters, including the celebrated Aberdeen Breviary, now one of the rarest and most valued relics of typographic art. At the same period, Gavin Douglas, afterwards Bishop of Dunkeld, was dean of the collegiate church of St. Giles at Edinburgh, and added to the lustre of that bright era of learning, by his beautiful poem of the Palace of Honour, and his fine translation of Virgil into the Scottish dialect; a work still held in high admiration for its vigorous and free rendering of the Roman bard.

The troubles, however, which followed the disastrous events of 1513, and left young Craig to struggle against the hardships involved in orphanage and national adversity, were no less inimical to the encouragement of learning. The death of its royal patron put a stop to the progress of the typographical art in Scotland; of Dunbar little more is heard, and the able and gifted Bishop of Dunkeld, after sharing, both as a peace-maker and a sufferer, in the factious struggles of the Scottish nobles, at length died in poverty and exile. Still, it cannot be doubted that the period in which young Craig pursued his early education, was one well calculated to influence a thoughtful and studious mind. Sir David Lindsay was then in the full vigour of life, while the works of his more gifted predecessor, so recently disseminated by means of the newly invented art of printing, must still have exerted a considerable influence on the age.

Few circumstances connected with the early years of Craig have been preserved in any of the notices of his contemporaries, so that we are left to form our own conclusions as to the gradual progress of his mind in the pursuit of knowledge, and the search after truth. It cannot be doubted, however, that one who pursued with such avidity the learning of the age, would not fail to secure the perusal of such works as were then brought within the reach of a wider circle, by the instrumentality of the printing-press. No work, at that period, and for long after, exercised a greater influence on the popular mind, than the satiric poems of Sir David Lindsay. The form in which his exposures of the corrupt priesthood, and of the deadly errors of the Romish Church, were issued, prevented their exciting the same immediate animosity and opposition, which the graver censures and arguments of theologians would have at once aroused in the clergy. They sapped the faith of the ignorant in the long-credited infallibility of the church, excited the scorn and ridicule of the better educated against the ill-sustained assumptions of the priesthood, and paved the way for the national reformation that so speedily followed. The early doubts that troubled the mind of young Craig, and checked him in the implicit faith he was taught to render to the dogmas of the Church of Rome, may, with much probability, be traced to such a source as this; a means of enlightenment then frequently offered to the people, by those who would have been the first to prevent it, could they have seen the consequences it would produce. Craig would be about seventeen years of age when Lindsay's first poem was produced, and about his twenty-second or twenty-third year when he may have both studied and witnessed the representation of what was styled his "Pleasant Satire of the Three Estates, in commendation of Virtue and vituperation of Vice."

Row, in his History of the Kirk of Scotland, furnishes

a striking instance of the influence of this last work on the popular mind. "For the more particular means," he remarks, "whereby many in Scotland got some knowledge of God's truth in the time of darkness, there were some books set out, such as Sir David Lindsay's poesie upon the Four Monarchies, wherein other treatises are contained, opening up the abuses among the clergy at that time." In the year 1553, he tells us, "Sir David Lindsay's satire was acted in the amphitheatre of Perth, before King James the Fifth, and a great part of the nobility and gentry, from morn to even, which made the people sensible of the darkness wherein they lay, of the wickedness of the churchmen, and did let them see how God's church should have been otherways guided than it was; all which did much good for that time." The following incident is mentioned by this historian, which strikingly exemplifies what has been already remarked. A friar was preaching in Perth, in the church where the pupils of Andrew Simson, then a zealous adherent of the Romish Church, attended. In the course of his sermon, the friar sought to win the attention of his audience, by relating some surprising miracles, and began to inveigh bitterly against the Huguenot preachers, as he styled the Protestants, who were then beginning to instruct the people in the open fields. In the midst of his vehement invectives, a loud hissing and shouting arose against him, in that part of the church where Simson's scholars, to the number of three hundred, were seated, which so terrified the preacher, that he ran out of the pulpit, and fled from the church in dismay. A complaint was lodged with the magistrates against the school, and Simson was called upon to institute an inquiry, and to punish the delinquents. On pursuing his investigation, it was found that the disturbance arose from the son of a craftsman in the town, who possessed a copy of Sir David Lindsay's satire, which he was in the habit of reading to his school-fellows. When the youth

was about to be punished for his delinquency, he defended himself with great tact and courage, denying that the book was heretical, and engaging, if the master would read it through, he was content, if he then pronounced it an heretical book, to submit to any punishment he chose to inflict.

The teacher read through the book, and closed it with very different opinions of heresy from any he had before maintained. He made the best excuses he could to the council for the tumultuous behaviour of his pupils; but concluded with this very pithy hint to those who took offence at the protest of his pupils against their erroneous preaching, that "he was persuaded, if the friars would leave off their invectives against the new preachers, the bairns would be quiet enough!" an advice that the next preachers took care to profit by.

Such an incident, showing the state of men's minds at this period, and the influences that were brought to bear on the youthful students of learning, may suffice to suggest some of the sources from whence the earnest inquiries and doubts originated, which we shall speedily see exercising so important an influence on the young student whose eventful life we are desirous of tracing. It was altogether impossible for John Craig to gratify his early thirst for knowledge without coming in contact with some of those spirited and lively writings of his contemporaries, which were so much more suited to win the attention of an ardent and unbiassed mind, than the dull routine of breviary and miraculous church legends, which would form the sole schooling of the clóisters. Nevertheless, it was only by slow and unexpected means that the truth was to break in on the mind of the scholar, long after he left his native land, and passed beyond the reach of those influences we have described. We can, indeed, form only a very vague conception of the difficulties that beset an inquiring mind at such a period. The light without was so

uncertain, and so hard to obtain, while doubts and fears, and all the strong influences of early prejudices, hemmed in the soul on every hand, and left the dismayed inquirer, like the shipwrecked mariner, alone, and without rudder or compass, to seek the distant haven amid the winds and waves of a tempestuous night. In the early history of the Reformation in every part of Europe, no feature affords such striking evidence of the overruling hand of Providence in working out the purposes of his will, as the varied incidents that mark the career of the first labourers in the great cause of truth. The grand events that form the prominent points in the history of nations attract our interested study, as scenes possessing features of high import, and exciting admiration, or wonder and awe; but it is in the incidents of individual biography that those features occur which awake our sympathy, and enable us to enter with fellow-feeling into those scenes wherein the actors were men of like passions with ourselves, actuated by the same fears and hopes, and struggling to master the same difficulties that perplex our own minds, and striving, though with a far more vehement warfare, to win the same victory of truth, towards which the earnest soul still struggles. We shall now follow young Craig from the difficulties and hardships that beset his desolate childhood and youth, into the stirring scenes of active life, chequered by events, perhaps, as remarkable as ever occurred to any individual.

CHAPTER III.

THE CONVERT.

NOTWITHSTANDING the numerous difficulties and hardships that young Craig had to contend with, he obtained a good education. After acquiring the rudiments in some humble school, he repaired to St. Andrews' university,

where he completed his education, and made himself master of all the knowledge that was to be acquired at that ancient seat of learning. Soon after leaving the university, he removed to England, most probably owing to the unsettled state of his native country, harassed at that time by factions, and the contentions of the ambitious nobles, struggling for the control of the young King, James the Fifth, and the opportunity of governing the kingdom in his name. The best proof of Craig's attainments, at this period, is afforded by the fact, that he was received into the family of Lord Dacre, immediately after his removal to England, and became the tutor of his children. He was not, however, suffered long to enjoy the advantages that such a situation promised. War broke out soon afterwards between England and Scotland, and he was compelled to abandon his post and return to his native country. There he finally assumed the clerical character for which his previous studies were considered preparatory, according to the opinions of the age. He took upon him the vows of the cloister, and became a monk of the Dominican order.

It seems not improbable, from the circumstances that followed, that this step was adopted by Craig from the same motives that impelled Luther and many others of the Reformers to seek for peace and consolation in the more holy life that the cloisters promised; where, free from the temptations and allurements of the world, and with a life devoted entirely to the services of religion, they might hope for that comfort which they had found that the world could not bestow. If such were the motives with which the young student assumed the cowl, he speedily discovered the fallacy of his hopes. His earnest inquiries after truth excited the suspicion of his companions; he was seized on suspicion of heresy, and cast into prison. He had not, however, as yet arrived at any clear views of divine truth. Doubt and inquiry were the most marked

characteristics of his mind at this period. But these have at all times been sufficient to awaken the enmity of the interested partisans of error. He succeeded in clearing himself of the charge of heresy, and was restored to liberty. The war which had compelled his return to Scotland being by this time over, he soon after, in the year 1537, returned again to England, and endeavoured, with the assistance of Lord Dacre's influence, to procure a place in Cambridge. His reliance on this nobleman's aid proves the esteem in which he was held by that family; but he was disappointed in his attempt to obtain a post at the English university, and he soon after directed his steps to the continent.

After remaining for a time at Paris, then one of the chief seats of learning in Europe, Craig proceeded to Italy, bearing with him, most probably, very favourable recommendations from his English patron, as he was almost immediately received into the favour of the celebrated Cardinal Pole, a near relative of the English king. Through the interest of the Cardinal he was appointed to an honourable office in the monastery of the Dominicans at Bologna, and undertook the office of instructing the novices of the cloister. In this new duty he acquitted himself to the full satisfaction of his superiors, and established so high a character among them for his learning and ability, that he was employed in various important ecclesiastical missions to different parts of the continent, in the execution of which he was able to render important services to his order. In return for these, and as an acknowledgment of his merit, he was advanced to the rectorate. In this new office he found additional opportunities for study, and, while examining the library of the inquisition attached to the monastery, he discovered among its treasures a copy of Calvin's Institutes. The study of this work revived in his mind all his early doubts, and opened up to him views of divine truth which he had never

before had any conception of. The consequence of this was, that he determined to renounce all the errors of the Romish Church, and become zealously attached to the reformed doctrines.

A new life was now opened up to the ardent student. Knowledge had been the object of his pursuit hitherto, and its varied fruits the highest truths that seemed to await his research; but now he found the learning of the schools surpassed by the simplicity of the New Testament revelations. Filled with all the ardour of a new convert, Craig was little inclined to make a secret of his change of sentiments, and even when warned of the dangers he incurred thereby, he referred his advisers to the solemn warning of Christ, "He that denieth me before men, him will I deny before my Father which is in heaven." There happened at this time to reside among his associates in the Dominican monastery at Bologna, an aged monk, who, like himself, had wandered from the rugged hills and the bleak skies of Scotland to the sunny clime of Italy. The old man's heart warmed towards his young countryman, thus cast, like himself, on the fickle favour of strangers; and when he saw him so resolute in the declaration of his conscientious convictions, in defiance of all menaced dangers, he strove to rescue him from falling a sacrifice to his generous zeal.

It is probable that the old monk sympathized in the views of truth that his young countryman had adopted; he, at any rate, felt towards him as a parent, and urged him immediately to quit the monastery, and retire to some Protestant country, where he might maintain his belief, free from the terrors of the Italian Inquisition. Craig was so far influenced by his aged countryman's advice, that he procured a discharge from the convent, and soon afterwards left Bologna, never again to see the old man whose heart had yearned towards him as towards a son, and whose doubts, it may be, had been removed, and his faith

strengthened and established, by the conversation of the ardent young disciple.

After leaving the convent, Craig became tutor in the family of an Italian nobleman, who had embraced similar religious sentiments with himself. There he found himself relieved from the prying surveillance of Dominican inquisitors and monks, and free to follow out his researches into the great truths that he had discovered. In company with his noble host, he was accustomed to study the Scriptures, and to search into the evidences that more and more opened his eyes to the errors of the system by which they had been so long enslaved. That, however, was not a period when such researches could be pursued anywhere in safety, and least of all in Italy. At this time the papal throne was filled by Paul the Fourth, one of the haughtiest and most intolerant popes that ever claimed to be the successor of St. Peter. He was a zealous promoter of the Inquisition, and encouraged its emissaries to pursue with untiring diligence, and root out every taint of heresy in Christendom. These active agents of intolerance were not long in discovering the sentiments of the noble family within whose bosom the converted Dominican had found shelter and peace. Both Craig and his noble host were arrested by the inquisitors on a charge of heresy, and cast into prison, and soon after they were both dragged to Rome. What became of the nobleman we do not learn. Whether the interest of high connexions could avail in such perilous times to rescue him from the fangs of the persecutors, or if he perished by a violent death, and the victim of their fury, does not appear. Craig, however, was cast into the dungeons of the Inquisition, and, after languishing there for nine months, he was brought to trial before that merciless tribunal. There he made a bold confession of his faith, and was condemned, along with several others, to be burnt at the stake.

Thus speedily were the warnings of the old monk of

the monastery at Bologna verified. He who had been the accredited ambassador of the order to every part of Europe, was now, by his conscientious change of views, become the object of their deadliest persecution. Doubtless the poor captive often thought of the warnings of his old friend and fellow-countryman, as the dreary months of captivity passed on, and brought with them no ray of hope to cheer the terrible gloom of that dark prison-house. But there is a hope that not even the bolts and bars of the Inquisition can exclude; and this it was that sustained the solitary prisoner, when all earthly hope seemed for ever fled. One step only now remained between the dungeon and the stake; but his Master had other work for him; and, in a most wonderful and unlooked-for manner, Providence was to open up a way of deliverance, and guide him, with many remarkable evidences of overruling care, to the scene of his future labours, in the far-distant land of his birth.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ROMAN INQUISITION.

On the 11th of April 1555, Marcello Cervion assumed the pontifical crown, under the title of Marcellus the Second. His life had been serious and irreproachable, and a contemporary writer remarks of him: "The opinion entertained of this Pope's worth and incomparable wisdom filled the world with hope." The commencement of his rule seemed to realize the anticipations of his admirers; but, says another of his contemporaries, "the world was not worthy of him:" he died on the twenty-second day of his pontificate. His successor was Cardinal Gianpietro Caraffa, described by one of his biographers as "old,

haughty, intolerant, and intent upon aggrandizing his nephews." He was the most austere of all the cardinals, had mainly contributed to the confirmation of the old doctrine at Trent, and was himself the restorer of the infamous Inquisition. He might have been held not so much the representative, as the impersonation of blind relentless bigotry. He was already verging on his eightieth year, yet his eye burned with all the fire of youth, and his spare and attenuated limbs moved with an elasticity that seemed to set old age at defiance. He would sit up whole nights, even with no other motive than the following out of some favourite study. "Such natures," says Ranke, "arise from time to time; they form their conceptions of the world and all its purposes from a single point of sight; their individual instincts are so powerful as to tincture all their views; they are indefatigable speakers, and always possess a certain freshness of manners, pouring forth in inexhaustible streams the system of thought that has grown up in them by a sort of fatality. How vastly important do they prove at times, when all their actions are purely and absolutely dependent on their opinions, and their will becomes united with power! What might there not have been expected of Paul the Fourth, who had never known what it was to pause from any motives of discretion, who had always carried out his opinions with the utmost impetuosity, now that he was exalted to the topmost station?" His election was, indeed, one of those strange and unexpected results, in no sphere so frequently exhibited as in the elections of the popes. There the jarring of rival interests has often led to the most unlikely choice, each party preferring such an election to the chance of a rival's success.

Cardinal Caraffa, who is styled by a contemporary "a loitering hypocrite, who makes matter of religious conscience of peppering a thistle," was elected Pope, contrary to every probability and expectation; and to the surprise

of no one more than himself. But this only strengthened him in his bigotry. He knew, he said, that he had never been complaisant to any one, and he had never granted a single favour to a cardinal, and therefore he concluded that it was not the cardinals, but God, who had chosen him, and called him to that high office for the accomplishment of his purposes.

Such was the spiritual and temporal ruler of Rome, when the poor Dominican monk and his noble host were dragged to the dungeons of the Roman Inquisition and condemned to the stake. What hope was there of mercy from any Pope, and least of all from such a one as this? The first years of his pontificate were spent in a fierce, intolerant, relentless war against Spain, in which he hesitated not to employ heretic mercenaries, who laughed at the whole system whose head they were engaged to serve. The close of it was occupied in imprisonments, excommunications, and autos-da-fés.

One of these latter horrible displays of cruelty and intolerance was appointed to take place on the 19th of August 1559; and for this poor Craig was preparing himself, as he best might, in the solitude of the dreary dungeon of the Inquisition. In prayer, and earnest seeking for Divine support, the long nights and days passed on. Doubtless his spirit often sank within him, as thus alone, with none to communicate with him but the merciless familiars of the Inquisition, he anticipated the dreadful death that awaited him. At length the last day of captivity arrived, and the morrow was to witness the terrible agonies with which he must struggle into eternity; when, lo! all Rome is filled with shouting and tumult, the noise of which reaches even to the grim vaults of that dread prison-house. The indomitable, intolerant old bigot, steeled by his own passionate temperament into invincibility, had yielded at length to the only sure conqueror of such spirits. While commending the Holy See, and the Inqui-

sition which he had restored, to the assembled cardinals, he suddenly fell back and expired.

Paul IV., on his accession to the Papal See, had remitted taxes to the Romans, and imported corn, and otherwise rendered himself so popular, that congratulations and festive pageants celebrated his accession, and a statue was erected to him by the people. His stern, relentless rule, however, speedily banished such hasty impressions from the popular mind, and when his death was made known only four years afterwards, the same fickle multitude arose in tumultuous assemblage, and declared him an evil-doer to the city and to the whole earth. The statue which they had erected to him was torn down from its pedestal, broken to pieces, and the head, with the triple crown, dragged through the streets. In all this the nobles were no less active than the ruder populace. The Colonnas, Orsini, Cesarini, and Massini, all joined with their followers in these tumultuous proceedings. The prisons were broken open; the Dominican convent, Della Minerva, was assaulted and attempted to be set on fire; and the buildings of the Inquisition were pillaged and left in a blaze; the familiars and jailors of the tribunal maltreated; and the dungeons thrown open wherein their victims lay awaiting their fate on the morrow.

Craig and his fellow-captives lost no time in availing themselves of this wonderful deliverance, that seemed as life from the dead. They hastily fled from the city, and Craig, making his way towards the northern gate, was about to proceed to Bologna on foot, trusting to find some friends there ready to aid him. He had only reached the suburbs of Rome, however, on his way towards the great northern road, when he was seized by a company of banditti, and being destitute of every means of satisfying their rapacity, they determined to drag him back and deliver him up to the Inquisitors, from whose dungeons he had just fled. At this moment, the poor prisoner's heart

must have sunk within him, at the prospect of thus losing the liberty he had only then so wonderfully regained. But their leader, after intently looking on Craig, took him aside, and asked him if he had ever been at Bologna. On his answering in the affirmative, the man inquired if he recollected, as he was one day walking there in the fields with some young noblemen, having administered relief to a poor maimed soldier who asked him for alms? Craig, in confusion, declared that he had forgotten the circumstance. "But I have not forgotten it," replied the bandit; "I am the man you relieved, and am glad to have it now in my power to return the kindness which you showed to a distressed stranger." He accordingly set him at liberty, supplied him with money to support himself on the journey, and directed him as to the best route for him to pursue in order to escape detection.

Thus filled with renewed hope and confidence, and with overflowing gratitude to that Divine providence that had again snatched him from the fangs of the persecutors, he joyfully bade a last farewell to Rome, and bent his steps in the direction indicated by his grateful counsellor, pressing onward toward the scene of his conversion at Bologna.

CHAPTER V.

THE EMPEROR MAXIMILIAN.

The fugitive pursued his journey through the north of Italy, shunning all public roads, lurking generally in some obscure place during the day, and resuming his travel at night. By this means, after encountering many hardships and dangers, he at length made his way to Bologna. But there he met with a very unpromising reception. The friends and relatives of the nobleman in whose

house he had latterly resided, had either fled, or were so intimidated by his fate, that Craig could look for no aid from them; and such of his own former associates as he ventured to approach, shrunk from him with alarm or disgust, as a notorious and condemned heretic. Craig speedily discovered that Bologna was little less dangerous as a place of refuge than Rome itself. He had reason to fear, from some things that transpired on his making himself known to his former acquaintances, that they meditated denouncing him and giving him up to the Inquisition. He accordingly made his escape as privately as possible from Bologna, and took his way to Milan. He was now, however, in a worse state than when on his journey from Rome. The money so unexpectedly bestowed on him by the leader of the banditti, had sufficed to supply all the necessities of his journey to Bologna. But there, where he had formerly had many friendly associates, among whom he doubted not to have found a ready and hospitable welcome, he was repulsed with every symptom of suspicion and distrust; and when he at length hastily fled, in terror of their abandoning him to the cruel fate from which he had just been delivered, his funds were exhausted, and he was nearly destitute of every means of subsistence. The heartless conduct of those on whose friendship he had relied, made him feel more acutely the danger of his position, and he wandered along in darkness and hunger, seeking out the most solitary and unfrequented by-ways, and dreading to discover in every wayfarer an emissary of the Inquisition.

One day, when his strength was utterly exhausted by fatigue and privations, he came to a desert place, where, throwing himself down upon the ground, he felt himself like the Prophet Jonah, when "he fainted and wished in himself to die, and said, It is better for me to die than to live." While thus beset with the bitterest reflections, and bowed down with despondency and doubt, he

perceived a dog come from out of a neighbouring wood and approach him with a purse in its teeth. His first impression was, that it had probably been sent by some evil-intentioned person, who was concealed in the wood, and sought thereby to find occasion for a quarrel, or for criminating him by an accusation of theft. He accordingly endeavoured to drive the animal away; but as it continued to fawn upon him, and at length laid the purse down at his feet, he took it up, and found it contained a sum of money sufficient to enable him to prosecute his journey.

The forlorn traveller instantly recognised in it a special token of the favour and kind providence of God, and felt his mind filled with gratitude for His mercy, and with shame for that want of faith that had permitted him so soon to forget the providential care that had already snatched him from the dungeon and the stake of the inquisitors, and had found him a friend and counsellor even in the captain of banditti. He proceeded on his way with renewed energy, elated with joy and confident hope; he soon reached a little village where he procured some refreshment, and from thence prosecuted his journey with safety until he reached Vienna. There, with the courage and lively faith which he ever after exhibited, he openly preached in public, assuming again his Dominican garb, and proclaiming from the pulpit the truths he had so steadfastly adhered to in the prospect of a cruel death.

The imperial throne was occupied at this period by Maximilian the Second, whose government has been praised alike by Protestants and Catholics, for its tolerance, moderation, and respect for their local privileges and usages. The fame of the new preacher rapidly spread through the city; many flocked to hear him, and at length the rumour of his eloquence and pure doctrine reached the ear of the Emperor, who sent for him to preach before him. Maximilian was pleased with the sincerity, and won by the eloquence and zeal of the preacher, and

Craig soon became a favourite at the court of that sovereign.

Such was the strange position of things even at this late period in the history of the Reformation, the very middle of the sixteenth century. Had the leaders of the Church of Rome, and those who most zealously devoted their powers to its service, only been content to reform the more glaring offences in the life of the clergy, and the most notorious corruptions of the church, so as to deprive its opponents of the strong weapon they thereby possessed against it, there can be no doubt that the Pope might have long enjoyed his supremacy unquestioned. Comparatively few of the early Reformers were inclined, in their first movements, to separate from the Church of Rome, and denounce it as that corrupt system against which they were afterwards led to believe the anathemas of prophecy had been directed. Most of them took a far narrower view, and were content to preach the truth for the acceptance of those they addressed, in the full assurance that the evils which so marred the beauty of the Christian church were but corruptions that had sprung up through ignorance and error, and might yet be swept away, leaving the church pure as in apostolic times. So was it with Huss and Jerome of Prague, and even so with Luther, the great champion of Protestantism. It was not till they were driven, by the hatred and persecution of the Hierarchy, to examine more closely into the Scriptural authority on which they pretended to base their proud assumptions, that they were led first to doubt, and then boldly to challenge, their high assumptions, and to proclaim the Pope as the antichristian usurper of the throne of Christ, the only bishop and pastor of the universal church. From the same reason it arose, that many emperors and rulers who had no thought of throwing off their allegiance to Rome, became the patrons and succourers of some of its ablest opponents; and thus we find the Emperor of Rome

assuming as his favourite the denounced and condemned heretic, who had so narrowly escaped the flames of the Papal autos-da-fés, and had fled to his dominion a friendless and trembling fugitive.

Craig continued to officiate for some time at the court of the Emperor Maximilian, and gained his favour more and more by his eloquence and learning, and the devoted piety of his life. His fame spread on all hands, and speedily reached the ears of his Roman persecutors, who learned with indignation that the heretic whom they had doomed to the stake was the cherished favourite of a Catholic emperor. The Inquisitors immediately appealed against him to the Pope.

Pope Pius IV., who had succeeded Paul in the Papal throne, differed widely from his predecessor. The Inquisition, which the latter had restored and delighted to foster, was to him rather an object of dislike. Yet how trifling a matter was it to his Holiness what injustice or cruelty should be practised on heretics! He was of a gay and jovial disposition, and troubled himself little about such matters. Had it not existed before, it would not indeed have been established in his pontificate: but, while he overturned the policy, and sacrificed with merciless rigour the favourites of his predecessor, he left the familiars of the Inquisition which he had restored, to pursue without restraint their unhallowed and irresponsible system. "For his own part," says Ranke, "he had no good will to the Inquisition; he censured the monkish harshness of its proceedings, and seldom or never frequented the congregation; but, on the other hand, he never ventured to molest it, declaring that he knew nothing about the matter, that he was no theologian; and he left it all the power it had possessed under Paul the Fourth." To this indifferent Pontiff the Inquisitors complained, and found no difficulty in obtaining from him a letter, addressed to the Emperor Maximilian, in which he demanded of "his

dearly-beloved son" to deliver up the condemned and excommunicated heretic to the familiars of the Inquisition, that he might be brought back to Rome, and suffer the punishment which had been already awarded him by Holy Church.

It was not possible that the Emperor should longer succour him, unless he was prepared to risk a general war, and himself become the object of the church's dreaded anathema. He did not, however, abandon him to his enemies; but, showing him the Pope's letter, he furnished him with a safe conduct out of Germany, and dismissed him with good wishes for his welfare.

Craig, it may be readily believed, lost no time in availing himself of the friendly warning and assistance of his royal patron. He hastened to leave the city that had afforded him so hospitable a welcome, but in which he could no longer remain in safety; and concluding, from the causes which compelled him to make so precipitate a departure from Vienna, that the same influence would be directed against him in any Roman Catholic country to which he might retire, he resolved on immediately directing his course to England.

CHAPTER VI.

THE RESTORATION.

JOHN CRAIG, the fugitive Dominican, thus persecuted from city to city, at length reached England, about the year 1560, and learning there of the reformation which had taken place in his native country, he decided on immediately returning thither, and offering his services to the church. He found, however, on once more revisiting his country, after an absence of twenty-four years, that he had so nearly forgotten his mother-tongue, as to be incapable of preaching intelligibly to a Scottish audience. He ac-

cordingly preached in Latin for a considerable time to such scholars as his learning and abilities attracted to hear him. The chapel of St. Mary Magdalene, an ancient edifice which still stands in the Cowgate of Edinburgh, and retains some remains of its early decorations in Roman Catholic times, was set apart for his use. He continued to officiate there in the Latin tongue, until, through time and intercourse with his fellow-countrymen, he had sufficiently recovered his native language to take a share in the ordinary duties of the ministry.

Before the close of the year 1561, Craig was appointed to be the colleague of Knox, in the parish church of Edinburgh, an arrangement which sufficiently proves the high estimate that was formed of his talents and piety. From that time he took a leading share in the chief events connected with the early history of the Church of Scotland, and his name appears prominently in some of the most remarkable occurrences of that chequered period of our national history. Among these, perhaps the most important is the share he had in the marriage of the unfortunate Scottish Queen with the Earl of Bothwell. The circumstances of that event are well known to every student of Scottish history. They have been briefly related by one of Queen Mary's biographers, in the following words:—

"On the 20th of April 1567, little more than two months after the assassination of Darnley, Bothwell procured the signatures of a number of the nobility to a document setting forth, first, his innocence of that crime; secondly, the necessity of the Queen's immediately entering again into the marriage state; and, lastly, recommending James, Earl of Bothwell, as a fit person to become her husband. In two or three days after this Mary left Edinburgh for Stirling, on a visit to her infant son, and, as she was returning from thence, she was waylaid by Bothwell, accompanied by a troop of a thousand men, all well

mounted, at a bridge which crosses the river Almond, within a mile of Linlithgow. Mary, when she encountered Bothwell, was attended by but a slight retinue, and by only three persons of note; these were the Earl of Huntly, secretary Maitland, and Sir James Melville. Bothwell, having dismissed all her attendants, with the exception of the three last, seized the bridle of Mary's horse, and, immediately after, the whole cavalcade proceeded with their utmost speed to Dunbar, one of Bothwell's castles. Here Mary was detained for ten days, during which time Bothwell had succeeded in obtaining her consent to espouse him. At the end of this period, the Queen and her future husband returned to Edinburgh, and in a few weeks afterwards were married; Bothwell having previously obtained a divorce from his wife, the Lady Jane Gordon, and a formal pardon, before the lords of session, from Mary herself, for his having seized upon her person."

The influence which this step had upon the fate of the unfortunate Mary is well known. It is not necessary that we should pursue the course of events to which it led. It was to John Craig, however, the head minister of Edinburgh, that the Queen applied for the complétion of this ominous tie, and his conduct in consequence of this acquires an additional interest from being made the subject of comment by John Knox in his history, where he commends the firm and conscientious zeal with which his colleague pursued what he deemed the path of duty, equally indifferent to the frowns of the court and the prejudices of his own clerical brethren, and contrasts this with the time-serving conduct of Adam Bothwell, bishop of Orkney, who performed the marriage service.

On this occasion the banns of marriage were published by John Craig, in the High Church of Edinburgh, although he refused to take any share in the service that followed; and he afterwards successfully defended the line of conduct

he had pursued, when it was attempted to be impugned by some of his brethren.

He maintained the same firm and consistent walk till the close of his career. The following is the account given of the latter period of his life, in the "Biographies of Scottish Worthies:"—

"Thus Mr. Craig continued not only a firm friend to the Reformation, but a bold opposer of every encroachment made upon the crown and dignity of the Lord Jesus Christ. In 1584, when an act of parliament was made, that all ministers, masters of colleges, &c., should, within forty-eight hours, compear and subscribe the act of parliament concerning the King's power over all estates, spiritual and temporal, and submit themselves to the bishops, &c., upon which, Mr. Craig, John Brand, and some others, were called before the council, and interrogated, How he could be so bold as to controvert the late act of parliament? Mr. Craig answered, That they would find fault with anything repugnant to God's word: at whi h the Earl of Arran started up on his feet, and said, They were too pert; that he would shave their heads, pare their nails, and cut their toes, and make them an example unto all who should disobey the King's command and his council's orders; and forthwith charged them to appear before the King, at Falkland, on the 4th of September following.

Upon their appearance at Falkland, they were again accused of transgressing the aforesaid act of parliament, and disobeying the bishop's injunctions; when there arose some hot speeches betwixt Mr. Craig and the Bishop of St. Andrews; at which the Earl of Arran spake again most outrageously against Mr. Craig; who coolly replied, That there had been as great men set up higher that had been brought low. Arran returned, 'I shall make thee, of a false friar, a true prophet;' and, sitting down on his knee, he said, 'Now am I humbled.' 'Nay,' said Mr.

Craig, 'mock the servants of God as thou wilt, God will not be mocked, but shalt make thee find it in earnest, when thou shalt be cast down from the high horse of thy pride, and humbled.' "

This singular narrative of "the judgment pronounced upon the Earl of Arran" is repeated by James Melvill, in the valuable Diary which has been re-published by the Wodrow Society; and the author remarks on the *prophecy* of Craig, as he regards it to have been: "Which within certain years thereafter came to pass, when James Douglas of Parkhead ran him off his horse with a spear, and slew him; and his carcass, cast in an open kirk beside, before it was buried was found eaten by dogs and swine!" Such conduct was little calculated to win the favour of courtly judges. "He was forthwith discharged from preaching any more in Edinburgh, and the Bishop of St. Andrews was appointed to preach in his place; but as soon as the bishop entered St. Giles's church at Edinburgh, the whole congregation, excepting only a few courtiers, rose and went out, and Craig was speedily restored to his place and office." About the year 1572, he was separated for a time from his charge in the capital, and was sent by the General Assembly to preach at Montrose, "for the illuminating of the north," as the commission bore; and, when he had remained there about two years, he was sent to Aberdeen, "to illuminate those dark places in Mar, Buchan, and Aberdeen, and to teach the youth in the college there."

In 1579, new and extraordinary duties devolved on Craig. We have already seen him officiating as royal chaplain at the court of Vienna, and he now received the appointment of minister to the King, James the Sixth. He returned immediately to Edinburgh. But he proved a very different man from the royal chaplains of subsequent times. He took a leading share in all the General Assemblies of the church thereafter. He was the compiler of part of the Second Book of Discipline, and, as one of

his biographers remarks, "what gives his name its chief historical lustre, he was the writer of the NATIONAL COVENANT, signed, in 1580, by the King and his household, and which was destined, in a future age, to exercise so mighty an influence over the destinies of the country." He presents, indeed, a striking contrast to the royal chaplains of subsequent times. "He boldly opposed the proceedings of the court when he thought them inconsistent with the interests of religion, and did not scruple, on some occasions, to utter the most poignant and severe truths respecting the King, even in his Majesty's own presence." The following lively account, which occurs in the brief notice of him given in the "Biographies of Scottish Worthies," will afford a slight but sufficient sample of his mode of proceeding on such occasions:—

"In 1591, when the Earl of Bothwell and his accomplices, on the 27th of December, came to the King and Chancellor's chamber-doors with fire, and to the Queen's with a hammer, in the palace of Holyrood-house, with a design to seize the King and the Chancellor; Mr. Craig, upon the 29th, preaching before the King, upon the two brazen mountains in Zechariah, said, 'As the King had lightly regarded the many bloody shirts presented to him by his subjects craving justice, so God, in his providence, had made a noise of crying and fore-hammers to come to his own doors.' The King would have the people to stay after sermon, that he might purge himself, and said, 'If he had thought his hired servant (meaning Mr. Craig, who was his own minister) would have dealt in that manner with him, he should not have suffered him so long in his house.' Mr. Craig, by reason of the throng, not hearing what he said, went away." The incident is curious, not only as illustrating the courageous zeal of the King's chaplain—a striking contrast to his modern successors—but as a sample of the manners of the times.

The fine old collegiate church of St. Giles's at Edinburgh

is associated with many remarkable incidents connected with the national history, and among the most piquant of these are the somewhat undignified debates which occasionally took place between the preachers and the royal pedant. James would sternly disclaim the motives imputed to him, at the time of their utterance, and challenge the doctrines of the preachers when they dissatisfied him, doubtless often more to the amusement than the edification of the congregation. In some cases, however, the royal disputant exercised his power in the most despotic manner to silence the preachers that proved obnoxious to him; some of the best men of his time were imprisoned, or driven into exile, for refusing to be guided by his dictations, and many more owed their promotion, at a later period, to their subserviency to his will. The conduct of Craig stands out in striking contrast to this, and the influence of his unbending integrity and his great learning, appears from the manner in which the King submitted to his rebukes.

The labours of Craig were now drawing to a close. In the history of this period his name appears in nearly every important proceeding of the church. In the Assemblies he generally formed one of the few leading men, chosen for arranging any step affecting the declaration or elucidation of the doctrines of the Reformation. In the General Assembly which met at Edinburgh in August 1590, and at which the King was present, Craig was appointed, with four others, to draw up a form for the examination of communicants; and his colleagues, two of whom were the celebrated Robert Pont and Andrew Melville, appear to have submitted the matter entirely to himself. In the proceedings of the next General Assembly, it is described as "penned by their brother Mr. Craig," and is ordered to be printed. In like manner, in the commission of the same Assembly, which afterwards met, and appointed certain of their number to summon before them the earls, lords,

barons, and freeholders, who had been engaged in the insurrection at the bridge of Dee, Mr. John Craig is specially appointed to have the oversight of this important commission.

The form for examining those admitted to the communion, which was adopted by the General Assembly in 1591, appears to have closed the public labours of this great and good man. That same year, being completely worn out by his labours and the infirmities of age, John Craig resigned the office in the royal household, whose duties he had fulfilled with such stern and unswerving fidelity. Among the articles presented to that General Assembly by the King's Commissioner, there is one in which he craves, "that, in respect Mr. Craig is awaiting what hour God shall please to call him, and is unable to serve any longer, and his Majesty designing to place John Duncanson with the prince, therefore his Highness desired an ordinance to be made, granting any two ministers he shall choose, which was accordingly done." Immediately thereafter he withdrew from public labours, to prepare, in the calm evening of a well-spent lifetime, for that solemn hour which he had long waited for with Christian fortitude, and the trustful anticipations of a faith grounded on so many proofs of divine favour and love. He died on the 4th of December 1600, in the eighty-eighth year of his age; having been born in the reign of James the Fourth of Scotland, while the military array of his native land was mustering for deadly feud with their "auld enemies, the English." His life had extended through the reigns of four sovereigns, and the grandson of that monarch was then waiting, with ill-concealed impatience, the death of Queen Elizabeth of England, which was to make way for his assumption of that throne, and the union of the ancient rivals under one crown. The religious changes of that period are even more remarkable than the political ones. The corruptions of the Romish clergy had indeed been subjected to

the self-criminating ridicule of Dunbar and Kennedy at the court of James the Fourth, and the powerful satirist Lindsay was then attached to the royal household, and in attendance on the young heir-apparent, in whose service his earliest poetic efforts were produced; but the whole aspect of the times was little calculated to suggest to the most sanguine the thought of the powerful and wealthy church being in so brief a period shaken to its foundations, and banished from the land whose destinies it had ruled with such despotic sway. Yet the young Scottish Dominican, who left his native land under a suspicion of heresy against the all-dominant and intolerant Church of Rome, lived to return to that land and take his place among the pastors of a Protestant people, and to fill the office of royal chaplain to a Protestant king.

The life of this great and good Reformer which we present to our readers in these pages, is no abridgment of any larger one now in existence, but contains nearly all that is known concerning him, and has been derived from the histories of the period, the biographies of his contemporaries, and similar authentic sources. It is a curious fact, showing the all-engrossing nature of the one subject that occupied the minds of religious men at that period, that the life of one so eminent in the church as John Craig, and a life, too, so full of the most remarkable tokens of Divine providence and care, should have only been recoverable by posterity from such gleanings as are incidentally to be found in contemporary history.

We are not left, however, to guess at the character of the Reformer. Scanty as these notices are, they exhibit a man of indomitable courage and rectitude of purpose. One of whom we are persuaded that nothing could turn him aside from the clear path of commanded duty when once he had discovered it. He appears, too, as a man of genial affections. The faith he felt in his former friends, and the confidence with which he was prepared to cast

himself on the protection of that friendship they had formerly professed for him, when he returned to his old companions at Bologna after his flight from Rome, show that guileless faith in others which conscious rectitude often exhibits. It is the source of that simplicity which is so frequently an accompaniment of great genius, and forms one of its highest ornaments. Of the eminent talents of Craig, we can need no better evidence than his life affords. Promoted, by his own unaided ability, to important offices, and a high rank in the Dominican order, we find him thereafter successively adopted into the favour of Cardinal Pole, the Emperor Maximilian the Second, and King James the Sixth of Scotland. Soon after his return to his native land, he is appointed the colleague of its most eminent Reformer, and from this he is only released, for a time, to fulfil still more important duties, as the representative and apostle of the church, through some of the most destitute districts of the land. His generosity is exhibited in one of the most remarkable occurrences we have related, where he owed his liberty to the gratitude of one of the objects of his charity; and his sincere and unaffected piety shines clear through every incident of his life that is known, until at length we find him descending with faltering steps into the vale of years, and, at the close of a long and well-spent life, "awaiting what hour God shall please to call him." We know of no biography among all the great and good men whose names adorn the church in the sixteenth century, that presents more striking instances of Providential oversight, than those that mark the eventful career of JOHN CRAIG, THE SCOTTISH DOMINICAN.

THE FIRST

REFORMERS OF SPAIN.

THE

FIRST REFORMERS OF SPAIN.

"First among nations, proud and chivalrous,
And noble too, the Spaniard bore the brunt
Of Moslem warfare. From her fertile vales
The peasant came, and from her halls the knight,
And from her palaces the maiden queen,
Fair Isabel, the generous friend of worth!
Maiden no longer, but content to share
With Ferdinand the honours of two crowns,—
The honours and the infamy, alas!
Spain's glory, her enslavement, and her shame,
By superstition's tyranny discrowned."

SPAIN occupies a peculiar yet singularly interesting position in the history of European kingdoms. At the period of the great revival of learning in Europe, it stood foremost among the nations of Christendom as distinguished for wealth, chivalry, and national enterprise. It exhibited the gorgeous magnificence of architectural and artistic display in its cathedrals and palaces, such as still remains unequalled as a whole in Europe. It was also a spot of peculiar interest then, as the last scene of the protracted struggle between the

crescent and the cross; between the Mahometan and the Christian arms; and where there then existed so many memorials of the civilization and the magnificence of the Moorish conquerors who so long maintained their empire in the peninsula. Legend and ballad and song still preserve in the sunny vales of Spain the memory of its chivalrous Moorish conquerors; the gorgeous ruins of the Alhambra attest their architectural skill and their refined luxury; and numerous remains, even in the temples consecrated to the worship of the Romish Church, prove the extent and endurance of their dominion. From this ancient kingdom, where the followers of Mahomet had settled down to rest and abide as the natives of the soil, they were at length driven forth by the enthusiastic Spaniards; they retreated step by step, contesting every inch of ground, and yet no sooner have they crossed the narrow strait that separates the rock of Gibraltar from the African shores, than they seem to vanish, like the genii of their own Eastern legends, leaving no trace of that learned, wise, and skilful people, whose sages and doctors surpassed in their knowledge the learning of northern Europe, and whose artists have left such lasting proofs of genius and skill.

Doubtless, however, the contact with such a people exercised an enduring influence on the Spaniard, and contributed its share towards the production of that peculiar national character which still distinguished the natives of the Peninsula from every other people of Europe.

In Spain, as in every other kingdom of Europe, the history of the church, when minutely studied, exhibits numerous striking evidences of the influence of apostolic teaching, and the struggle between truth and error, before the Papal sway was recognised in all the full force of blighting tyranny which has so long oppressed that unhappy country. One of its most interesting connections with the East was so early as the seventh century, when

in its decision with reference to the ecumenical council which was held at Constantinople in the year 680, it clearly shows how strong, even at that period, was the power of that early teaching in its effect on the Spanish Church. M'Crie remarks of it, in his History of the Reformation in that country:—

"There is one piece of history which throws great light on the state of the Spanish Church during the seventh century, and which I shall relate at some length, as it has been either passed over or very partially brought forward by later historians. The sixth ecumenical council, held at Constantinople in the year 680, condemned the heresy of the Monothelites, or those who, though they allowed that Christ had two natures, ascribed to him but one will and one operation. In 683, Leo II., Bishop of Rome, sent the acts of that council, which he had received from Constantinople, to Spain, requesting the bishops to give them their sanction, and to take measures for having them circulated through their churches. As a council had been held immediately before the arrival of the Papal deputation, and a heavy fall of snow prevented the re-assembling of the members at that season, it was thought proper to circulate the acts among the bishops, who authorized Julian, archbishop of Toledo, to transmit a rescript to Rome, intimating in general their approbation of the late decision at Constantinople, and stating at considerable length the sentiments of the Spanish Church on the controverted point. A council, convened in Toledo during the following year, entered on the formal consideration of this affair, in which they proceeded in such a manner as to evince their determination to preserve at once the purity of the faith and the independence of the Spanish Church. They examined the acts of the council of Constantinople, at which it does not appear that they had any representative, and declared that they found them consonant with the decisions of the four preceding canon-

ical councils, particularly that of Chalcedon, of which they appeared to be nearly a transcript. 'Wherefore (say they) we agree that the acts of the said council be reverenced and received by us, inasmuch as they do not differ from the foresaid councils, or rather as they appear to coincide with them. We allot to them therefore that place in point of order to which their merit entitles them. Let them come after the council of Chalcedon, by whose light they shine.' The council next took into consideration the rescript which Archbishop Julian had sent to Rome, and pronounced it 'a copious and lucid exposition of the truth concerning the double will and operation of Christ;' adding, 'wherefore, for the sake of general instruction, and the benefit of ecclesiastical discipline, we confirm and sanction it as entitled to equal honour and reverence, and to have the same permanent authority as the decretal epistles.'

The council of Constantinople had condemned Pope Honorius I. as an abettor of the Monothelite heresy; a stigma which the advocates of Papal infallibility have laboured for ages to wipe off. But the Spanish council, on the present occasion, proceeded farther, and advanced a proposition which strikes at the very foundation on which the Bishops of Rome rest their claims, by declaring that the rock on which the church is built is the faith confessed by St. Peter, and not his person or office.

But this was not all that the Spanish clergy did. When the rescript of the Archbishop of Seville reached Rome, it met with the disapprobation of Benedict II., who had succeeded Leo in the popedom. Having drawn up certain animadversions upon it, his Holiness gave them to the Spanish deputy to communicate to his constituents, that they might correct those expressions savouring of error which they had been led incautiously to adopt. An answer, not the most agreeable to the Pope, was returned by Julian in the meantime; and the subject was after-

wards taken up by a national council held in 688 at Toledo. Instead of retracting their former sentiments, or correcting any of the expressions which the Pope had blamed, the Spanish prelates drew up and sanctioned a laboured vindication of the paper which had given offence to his Holiness, of whom they speak in terms very disrespectful, and even contemptuous. They accuse him of 'a careless and cursory perusal' of their rescript, and of having passed over parts of it which were necessary to understand their meaning. He had found fault with them for asserting that there are three substances in Christ, to which they reply: 'As we will not be ashamed to defend the truth, so there are perhaps some other persons who will be ashamed at being found ignorant of the truth. For who knows not that in every man there are two substances, namely, soul and body?' After confirming their opinion by quotations from the fathers, they add: 'But if any one shall be so shameless as not to acquiesce in these sentiments, and acting the part of a haughty inquirer, shall ask whence we drew such things, at least he will yield to the words of the Gospel, in which Christ declares that he possessed three substances.' Having quoted and commented on several passages of the New Testament, the council concludes in these terms: 'If, after this statement, and the sentiments of the fathers from which it has been taken, any person shall dissent from us in anything, we will have no farther dispute with him, but keeping steadily in the plain path, and treading in the footsteps of our predecessors, we are persuaded that our answer will commend itself to the approbation of all lovers of truth who are capable of forming a divine judgment, though we may be charged with obstinacy by the ignorant and envious.'"

Here then we have evidence of a strangely different state of things from that which has prevailed for so many centuries, with reference to that morally degraded and en-

slaved country. Nor is this a solitary instance. Spaniards of high station, and occupying influential offices in the church, are proved from history to have maintained in early ages the same opinions which formed in the sixteenth century the basis of the Protestant movement throughout Europe. Claude, Bishop of Turin, a name memorable among the early fathers of the church, condemned in the very strongest terms not only the worship of images, and the veneration paid to the relics and sepulchres of the saints; but he so far opposed himself to the devotees of superstition, as to maintain, on the authority of the earlier councils of his native church, that no pictures or statues should be admitted into churches, and nothing be permitted to be painted on their walls which the most ignorant could be conceived tempted to worship or adore. How strangely does this contrast with the present state of Spain! When a recent traveller there, that intelligent and most interesting observer, the author of the "Bible in Spain," had completed a tour through a large portion of the country, and witnessed the manners of the people, and the nature of their religious worship, he felt compelled to acknowledge the devout observances of the ignorant Mahometans of Africa to be more consonant with the simplicity of the worship of God, than the bigotry of the Spaniard, with his image of the Virgin elevated in every cathedral and church. This perverted system of mediatorial intercession he pronounces a gross and idolatrous superstition, that shuts out from that benighted nation the only access to God through the blood of his Son.

It is interesting, however, though a painful study, to investigate the history of this people during the long lapse of time that intervened between the seventh and the nineteenth centuries. It has not been by any means an unbroken descent from light to darkness, or from little light to less. Spain, on the contrary, enjoyed many of the same advantages that have led to such glorious results in

the history of our own happy land. She had her Bible, and her reformers, and her martyrs for the truth, as well as England. She had her struggle for the liberty of conscience and the victory of truth, as well as we; and when the dawn of a brighter day on benighted Europe broke first in the diffusion of learning,—proving how clearly Scriptural truth is born of the light, and cometh to the light, that its fruits may be made known,—then Spain partook largely of that promising influence, and added to the literature of Europe some of those valued treasures which we still most esteem.

Let us take a hasty glance at this interesting country, and at the incidents that characterize its rise to such vast magnificence, and its fall back into the degradation in which it has so long been sunk,—a degradation far more painful to think of than that untutored barbarism on which the Roman legions burst with harsh yet vivifying influences, and on which the teaching of the great Apostle of the Gentiles fell like the refreshing dew that wakes up the parched and withered mead to burst forth into a healthful green. "There is something majestic" says a recent writer, "in the geography of the Peninsula. It claims the appropriation of that word, though it must be applied often on a larger scale. The Atlantic Ocean rolls upon its western shores; the Mediterranean Sea girds its eastern cliffs; the Bay of Biscay defends it on the north; the Straits of Gibraltar guard it on the south; that lofty, naked rock, the Calpe—the Pillars of Hercules, according to ancient nomenclature and mythology—rises as a natural bulwark, a defiance point, a throne from which to rule the subtending continent, a palace in which the ancient god Terminus might dwell; from the opposite boundary, the Pyrenees heave up their granites,—a barrier and rampart which no ordinary foe can contest—throwing vast shadows upon the plains beyond them, enclosing ancient monarchies in their

bosom, their foundations on kingdoms, their pinnacles in the clouds, their declivities in the waves.

And there is no less interest to be taken in the story of this land. Its strain is that of lofty heroism. It is not only diversified by incident, but pregnant with principle: it is a thing of range, of marvel, of moral weight. Like the bow of heaven, large is its span and wide is its embrace; but, alas! it tells of no disparted tempest, no settled calm, the vermilion of war reddens it, and the reflection of arrested light blends it. Hardly can any parallel be found to it."

It is indeed a story that stands alone in the history of nations, and one pregnant with lessons of deepest interest to the faithful student of history. We have seen the state of comparative independence and purity in which its church remained in the seventh century, and how decided was the independent position it assumed, when contending for liberty of conscience and freedom of thought against the encroaching tyranny of Rome. The following century, however, witnessed its struggling at a disadvantage with a very different enemy.

After the overthrow of the empire of Pagan Rome, and the incursion of the Gothic nations of the north into the ancient kingdoms of southern Europe, Spain had experienced similar influences to those which produced such remarkable changes on the Italian Peninsula. A Gothic power had gradually arisen there, and was moulding the whole nation into form and consistency, when a far different current, setting in from the south and east, produced the remarkable changes to which we have already alluded as exercising so much influence in the formation of the Spanish national character.

In 711, the great battle of the Guadalete was fought near Xeres, in which the standard of the crescent was borne victoriously through the ranks of the Spanish forces,

and the kingdom of the Vizigoths was overthrown. But although their power was thus early prostrated, the spirit that had pervaded their rule was not so easily extinguished. Spain was indeed conquered, and in the Moslem's power. Roderic, the heroic leader whom the Spaniard still commemorates in the traditional songs and legends of his native valley, had perished in the fight, and the Christians of Spain were at the mercy of the infidel. The Saracens, however, were by no means the barbarians that superstitious prejudice delights to picture them. They governed the conquered land with wisdom and moderation, cultivated the most valuable arts of peace, and settled themselves down as those who had come to possess and enjoy that sunny land.

The history that follows is one of the strangest in the annals of great national events. For eight hundred years the Saracenic power maintained its footing in Spain. It established itself in complete independence of all other powers that had sprung from the fanatic zeal of the Arabian prophet's followers, it took up a position of high civilization and wise tolerance, and yet, during all that period, the faith of the conquered Spaniards maintained its vitality, while the spirit of self dependent nationality was unimpared, and slumbered on to awake at length, and successfully contend for independence. On this subject it has been remarked:—

"Our astonishment does not diminish when we behold the Saracen or Moor addicting himself not only to commerce but to agriculture. The art of irrigation, the culture of tropic plants, the production of sugar, show at once the habits of peace and the advances of science. The princes of this line were not like Omar, the hater and destroyer of learning; no name shines brighter than that of Alhakem, the collector of books and the patron of scholars. During his successor's reign, the Moresco empire was broken up, and a hundred little principalities

sprung out of it. Where, it may be asked, are we now to look for the Christian Goth? He is not lost. Of the twelve thousand body-guards which the monarch summoned around him, four thousand were always Christians. Whatever we may think of the incongruity, such was the fact; but they had been, though generally well governed, forced to the higher parts of the country. They sheltered themselves among the Asturias; they were not contented vassals. There was still a Christian Spain. She did not forget that all was once her own. She did not indifferently look upon the gleaming crescent; she did not ungrudgingly resign her power and fame. They soon were seen pressing downwards upon the Ebro and Douro. At the close of the eleventh century, they had victoriously approached the Tagus. There is now beheld a banner of no mean note. 'The Cid! the Cid!' is the battle cry.

The victory of Navas de Tolosa, 1212, secured the safety and the deliverance of the Christians; henceforth they were a little jeoparded. But the Arab strength was not crushed. Retreating before the arms of those whom they had held so long subdued, whom they had treated capriciously and sometimes truculently, they disputed each step, fought with their face to the foe, while they retired from the ground which they so much loved, nor betook themselves to an inglorious stand when they made good the possession of Granada for themselves. It was here that they exchanged the hopes of extension for those of defence. They found a natural fortress; they knew, from the number of their enemies, that it was in constant siege. The mountains round about them were their arsenals, their lines, their redoubts, their gates. They could shut out the pursuer; they themselves could sally at will. Many a foray did they wage; still it was a garrisoned nation—sentinel called to sentinel, post signalled to post. It was a region not only of security, but of fertility and beauty. The Vega beneath the capital, laved by the

Xenil, was a plain covered with miracles of vegetation. Lovely gardens bloomed amidst grim defiles. Almeria and Malaga unfolded their ports to the Balearic isles and to the Levant. There rose, in the midst of the province, overtowering the metropolitic height, the Alhambra, out of which have marched fifty thousand warriors, whose frescoes of richest tint to this hour are undimmed, whose fountains still make mournful music in their play and fall, whose firmer architecture has not yet begun to nod. Nature yet keeps her holiday amidst these proud monuments; her domain is only the more sweet for the shrinking away of man and his tumults; the golden citron flashes from its green leaf, the fair olive mantles in its wide-spreading luxuriance, the nightingale rests not from its lavish song.

This course of events is interesting in almost every view, but in none is it more so than as intercourse with the Moors affected the Spanish character. From them it borrowed much of its stateliness, gravity, and refinement. They were the most scientific and lettered people of their age; they were versed in astronomy, chemistry, and mathematics; they venerated Aristotle; they were the earliest discoverers of gunpowder; and to them we owe that which has produced far greater as well as far more benign effects—the invention of paper. Their presence enlightened and dignified a people who were now called to take so chief a part, and to exercise so stirring an influence, in the drama of the world. Nor is it less observable, that between nations so extreme there existed many original conformities. Both were of that temperament which we call the cavalier—there was the knightly bearing common to them; they were alike the heirs of a religious enthusiasm—they equally united the fierce passion of blood with the propagation or avengement of their most different creeds. They acknowledged mutual conditions of treaty, or armistice, or truce. They were honourable foemen, they were generous rivals;

and had not war been the national glory, or the threatening necessity of it appeared to them, exciting their ambition or awakening their fear, each might have been stimulated in social improvement by the other: both might have resistlessly stood behind their mountain-battlements, while nations had dashed themselves in pieces against their base. But an implacable hatred had succeeded to a political jealousy; fanaticism inflamed it, and it became a plot of extermination. Neither found occasion of boast; the triumph of the Spaniard was bought at a price, and accompanied with a shock which no foreign wealth, which no distant settlements, ever can compensate or repair."

Here then we find the formation of that peculiar national character going on, which marks the Spaniard to this day as a being differing in many respects from every other native of a European soil. It is desirable to watch its formation, and diligently to note the sources from whence it sprung; since to this must be ascribed much of the national history, as it developed itself in later events, and thus the Saracens must be ranked among the Reformers of Spain.

CHAPTER II.

FERDINAND AND ISABELLA.

THE contention between the Christians and the Moors of Spain was one for national liberty and independence. The security of these was followed in Spain, as in other countries, by a struggle of the people for free institutions. These we find developing themselves at a very early period. The feudal system lost its hold there sooner than in many other countries of Europe. Municipal corporations speedily followed, and a representative government was established so early as the middle of the twelfth cen-

tary, and the liberties of the people continued steadily to advance till near the close of the fourteenth century.

About this period, however, the victory begins to incline in a less favourable direction, though still only partially, and not without occasional popular triumphs; while the proud aristocracy of Spain were gradually rising into power. Meanwhile the church was not slow to avail itself of the movements we have described. A corporate influence had there, too, been at work; numerous and opulent conventual institutions had sprung up, and were acquiring a strength pregnant with fearful consequences for the future reign of superstition.

From that time till the middle of the fifteenth century, the destiny of Spain seemed to hang in the balance. Commercial guilds still maintained their influence in some sections of the Peninsula. Learning also found its patrons, and spread abroad its genial influences, and good and evil seemed to be contending on equal terms for predominance in the kingdoms into which Spain was then divided, when, in the year 1451, ISABELLA was born, the great Princess of Castile. Scarcely a year thereafter occurred the birth of FERDINAND, a royal prince whose name is for ever linked with hers, and whose glory is mainly due to the union that made him sharer in the glories of her reign. It was a stormy period of Spanish history on which they were cast, and many a tempestuous scene had to be passed through, and many a danger escaped, ere even the right of the future sovereigns should be acknowledged. Thus does an annalist of the events of the Princess Isabella's early career sketch some of its most important incidents, and depict the events under which a union was effected of the two chief kingdoms into which Spain was then divided. "Isabella's preferences were not consulted; she was made the puppet of state policy or royal caprice. Once was she doomed to the arms of a man of as hateful character as low pretensions;

but the Master of Calatrava died while journeying to receive his bride. Her example, when removed to the licentious court of her brother, remained spotlessly pure. The battle of Olmedo only protracted the civil struggle which now raged through the land. She, however, sought the protection of her brother Alphonso, a youth worthy of the highest esteem and admiration. He fell, most likely by treacherous means, into an untimely grave. It was then that she was tried, as was Jane Grey, by the confederates, to accept the crown. She solemnly refused, maintaining that so long as Henry lived it could not be vacant. The Marquis de Villana, unlike our Northumberland, could not prevail. The reward of loyalty and purity came at last. At Toros de Guisardo, amidst a splendid convocation of the highest dignitaries of the realm, Henry embraced his sister, recognised her as his successor, while, shortly after, the Cortes confirmed her title amidst the people's acclamations of applause.

She was now 'the rose and expectancy of that fair state.' Many a suitor came; our crook-backed Richard is supposed, though not by personal courtship, to have negotiated the important question from afar. Her affections were fixed on Ferdinand. He was rather younger than herself, of comely features and proportions, addicted to manly exercises, and endowed with many generous qualities. She also perceived the immense advantage of this union of kingdoms. The disposition in this case was mutual. Their peoples were of the same race and tongue. Their national character was of one mould. Mutual safety required the intermixture. But when she gave her consent to her youthful admirer, when the articles of marriage had been signed, her course of true love, like that of humbler channels, ran not smooth. She escaped from espionage and durance to Valladolid. But where was Ferdinand? He must come as bridegroom and king. Never had his fortunes apparently sunk so low. He was

found at Saragossa. The frontier was watched by his enemies. Ambushes were set to surprise and intercept him. He set out, travelling chiefly by night, as a muleteer. He had but six attendants, and the better to preserve his disguise, whenever the party reached an inn, he waited upon them. Princes do not escape common accidents; at one of these inns he left a not very well-furnished purse behind. Reaching Osma, where his friends awaited him, they mistaking him, a Lombard discharged from the rampart a heavy stone, which shot very near his head. But now all was safe. Success only was reserved for him. He was in his eighteenth year, she a year older. His expression of countenance, according to the pictures of him, is rather serious and downcast; hers more animated, steady, and serene. Their moral physiognomies it is more interesting and useful to study.

The happy couple were about equally poor. The exchequer of Arragon was exhausted; that of Castile was not at command. But on the morning of the 19th of October 1469, their nuptials were celebrated most publicly, if not magnificently. A dispensation was necessary, as they were within the prohibited degrees of blood. This proved to be a forgery, but they were ignorant of it. When a true one was obtained, some years afterwards, she learnt, for the first time, the fraud that had been practised upon her."

On the 11th of September the death of her brother Henry placed the crown of Castile on the head of Isabella. The crown of Arragon had devolved on Ferdinand, and the united rulers commenced a reign that placed their kingdom, at that period, foremost among the free nations of the world. Education was liberally encouraged. Chivalry found a wholesome stimulant under the genial influence of a female reign, that disciplined it to a more generous and rational course, while it deepened its intensity. The protracted Moorish wars had sufficed to secure the triumph

of arms. The influence of the blind dogmas of its superstitious chivalry were exhibited at an earlier period, in a romantic incident connected with Scottish history.

Robert the Bruce, the renowned assertor of his nation's liberties, died without accomplishing a vow he had made to take the pilgrim's staff, and, as an humble palmer, to visit the holy sepulchre. His faithful follower, however, undertook, at his dying request, to fulfil the letter of his vow, by depositing his heart in the sepulchre at Jerusalem; and we catch, among the romantic scenes of Spanish history, a passing glimpse of the Douglas, as he turns aside, in accordance with the superstitions of the time, to bear that dauntless heart into the fields of Spain, where the Infidel was contending most fiercely against the Christian, who strove to wrest from him the lands he had overrun.

Douglas perished there, and buried the Scottish monarch's heart on the field of victory. But it was a very different spirit from this which animated the court of Isabella; it had less of superstition and more of a refined gallantry, and, undoubtedly, in its influence, was favourable to the people. Victory followed in the course of the native Spanish arms. Citadel after citadel was snatched from the Moors. Granada was entered in triumph by the royal conquerors. The gorgeous halls of the Alhambra were thrown open to them. The cross was reared on the Saracenic minaret, and the church-bell rung forth its joyous peals from the towers that had been reared to call the Moslem to prayers. Such were the conquering sovereigns for whom Columbus found a New World.

CHAPTER III.

THE INQUISITION.

IT is a most strange and melancholy fact in the history of Spain, that that infamous engine of Romish intolerance,

the Inquisition, was established during the reign of its wisest and most virtuous sovereign, Isabella. Historians indeed, are divided in opinion, as to the exact period at which the Inquisition was founded; and the system which it formally legalized was undoubtedly one of slow and gradual growth, fostered by the priesthood of Rome, and sanctioned often by rulers who had little conception of the poisonous fruit whose bud they were induced to cherish. Persecution had long been carried on by the priests of Rome, and many of its victims had perished at the stake before a separate tribunal was established for the eradication of heresy. It is a memorable fact, however, in the history of the unhappy country of which we treat, that, long before the establishment of that institution which blasphemously assumes to itself the name of the Holy Office, the first person who is known to have been juridically condemned and put to death for heresy, was Priscillianus, the leader of a sect in Spain, so early as the close of the fourth century. He was accused by two Spanish bishops before a council held at Bordeaux. Priscillianus thereupon appealed to the Emperor Maximus, who was then residing at Treves, whither he had been brought; but the tyrannic spiritual power prévailed, and its victim was beheaded. The step, however, was severely reprobated by the most eminent men in the church, and Idacius, one of the Spanish bishops who had been most active against Priscillianus, was excommunicated, and died in exile.

Inquisitors were actively at work throughout Europe in the fourteenth century, as the annals of the persecuted Waldenses and Albigenses abundantly show. Still, it was in every case a special appointment. It was reserved for Spain, in the fifteenth century, and under the wise reign of Isabella, to introduce the Holy Office under a new and more appalling form, and give it that absolute and inde-

pendent power, by means of which the history of the modern Spanish Inquisition has been written in characters of blood and fire, in the annals of the degraded country that thus adopted it. This terrible history is the more remarkable, as Dr. M'Crie remarks, in his history of the Reformation there, "since on a review of criminal proceedings in Spain, anterior to the establishment of the Court of Inquisition, it appears, in general, that heretics were more mildly treated there than in other countries." And again he writes:—"Even after the barbarous custom of committing obstinate heretics to the flames had been introduced into other parts of Europe, Spain testified her aversion to sanguinary measures." How strangely does this contrast with the later history of Spain. In earlier times its inquisitors proceeded in the examination of heretics with something of the simplicity and straightforwardness of a judicial tribunal, desirous of ascertaining the truth on the subject they were investigating. "But,' says Dr. M'Crie, "this simplicity soon gave place to a system of the most complicated and iniquitous circumvention. Grossly ignorant of judicial matters, the Dominicans modelled their new court after what is called in the Roman Church the Tribunal of Penance. Accustomed, in the confessional, to penetrate into the secrets of conscience, they converted to the destruction of the bodies of men, all those arts which a false zeal had taught them to employ for the saving of their souls. Inflamed with a passion for extirpating heresy, and persuading themselves that the end sanctified the means, they not only acted upon, but formally laid down, as a rule for their conduct, maxims founded on the grossest deceit and artifice, according to which they sought in every way to ensnare their victims, and by means of false statements, delusory promises, and a tortuous course of examination, to betray them into confessions which proved fatal to their lives and

fortunes. To this mental torture was soon after added the use of bodily tortures, together with the concealment of the names of witnesses.

After this court had subsisted for two centuries and a half, it underwent what its friends have honoured with the name of a *reform;* in consequence of which it became a more terrible engine of persecution than before. Under this new form it is usually called the Modern Inquisition, though it may, with equal propriety, bear the name of the Spanish, as it originated in Spain, and has been confined to that country, including Portugal, and the dominions subject to the two monarchies."

Alfonzo de Hodeja, prior of the Dominican convent of Seville, has the infamous pre-eminence, in the history of this tribunal, of having been the first to propose to Ferdinand and Isabella the establishment of the Inquisition in Spain. Ferdinand readily listened to the suggestion, but the gentle and intelligent Queen Isabella hesitated for a time, and refused to sanction its introduction. The influence of the priesthood was all-powerful, however, in that superstitious age. The conscience of the Queen was alarmed by the representations of her confessors, and the terrible pictures they drew of the increasing heresy around her. Isabella, at length, reluctantly gave way, and the fate of the Spanish Peninsula was sealed. "And what was the influence of this tribunal," says a writer on the reign of Ferdinand and his consort, "which abused all the rules of evidence, all the methods of crimination, all the grounds of defence,—which always reminds us of the stealth, the spring, and the coil of the serpent? It was a blight and a ruin upon all. Upon a nature, upon a heart, than which none could be more noble,—upon the nature, upon the heart of Isabella, it stamped a crookedness and sternness necessarily alien to them. She yields to the dictatorship, which is the essence of confession,—she bows to an ascendency which the Catholic must allow to be within the

church, and still always beyond himself,—all with her is a reserved consent, an embarrassed concession, even to deprecations and tears,—yet she is forced to handle the horrid brand! A people—two noble races now conjoined —which had risen up against the system, is so depraved in a little time by its glosses, and so stricken by its fears, that it boasts the galling yoke, and glories in its shame. The censorship of the press immediately follows. Learning dies. The spirit of the mountains, an independence lofty as that of any age or clime, embraces its corroding chains. The bibliographical triumph of Alcala awakens a general fear, and its six hundred copies, evidently intended only for the learned, were barely licensed by Leo the Tenth, and that after hesitation and five years' delay. The sovereigns and the nations were cajoled that their extirpation of heresy, in the banishment of the Jews and the expulsion of the Moslems, by espiery and fagot, was the cause of Heaven's favour towards them in the magnificence of their new-won possessions. Extirpation! Ferdinand's eyes are just closed; the death-mist is hovering over those of Ximenes; they have done their utmost; their engine of extirpation has done its worst; there is but a year between their end; and Luther has already, at Wittemberg, published his thesis against the doctrine of indulgences, and, in five years more, Europe strains its ear that it might listen to him at the Diet of Worms. Extirpation! The Reformation had begun already. Much of inefficiency might thus be charged on the Inquisition. 'Its sanguine cloud' could not 'quench the orb of day.' But locally it did answer its design. It destroyed inquiry, and overpowered conviction. It closed each chink against the admission of light. It drank the blood of the saints. The same bigotry launched its Armada against England, and met its reward. It provoked a signal reprisal in the sacking of Cadiz. And what is Spain? Torn by parties, convulsed by revolutions, its mighty colonies rent from it,

with the exception of a single isle. Where are its once wide-wafted commerce, potent negotiation, and warlike state? Where is its navy which swept the seas? Where is its banner, which was simultaneously unfurled on three continents? Where are its literature and virtue? Where is the crown of Ferdinand and Isabella, with its streaming rays? 'For God hath put it in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.' "

CHAPTER IV.

ALFONSO DE VIRVES AND RODRIGO DE VALER.

We have now arrived at that interesting period in European history, when the human mind was awakening to inquiry, and when we are, therefore, enabled to turn aside from the investigation of general principles, and to behold their fruits manifested in the example of individuals. It is worthy, however, of special observation, how peculiar was the situation of Spain at this period, and how marked the contrast it exhibits, from the Italian peninsula, the centre of the Romish sway, and that country which has since been nearly as degraded as itself. The fifteenth century, which witnessed Spain, with all her magnificent conquests, thus bound a wretched captive in the hands of merciless spiritual despots, beheld Italy the arena of republican struggles for liberty, and of some of the noblest efforts for the encouragement of literature and art. The race, however, is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong. Neither to Spain, with all her wealth and glory, nor to Italy with her poets, her paintings, and her scholars, was that glorious liberty to be given, which springs from the pure revelation of the word of God, and

can influence every national and political institution by its all-pervading and genial force. A remote and isolated corner of the European family of nations which was then despised by both, was destined, through God's blessing, by the simple reception of that truth, to far surpass both in glory and power.

In the first stages of the Reformation movement, the influence of Erasmus was more dreaded than that of Luther by the Inquisitors of Spain, and the first victims of their persecuting policy were such as this apprehension might lead us to expect.

Alfonso de Virves, the Chaplain of his Most Catholic Majesty, Charles the Fifth, was one of the earliest objects of their suspicion. He appears to have been a scholar and a patron of learning. But he had none of the spirit of a martyr, and even less devotion to the cause of Reformation than the prudent and worldly-minded Dutch theologian, Erasmus, who so shrewdly balanced between his principles and his interests.

Alfonso de Virves was a special favourite of Charles the Fifth, and after the return of that monarch from Germany, whither his chaplain had accompanied him, he would hear no other preacher. It might have been supposed that the favourite of the king was safe against the assaults of Inquisitors, but when that secret tribunal was once established in Spain, the monarch became no less its slave than the meanest of his subjects. It shows, too, the jealousy with which the Inquisitors were prepared to guard against the slightest taint of heretical infection. The most that was known against Virves was, that he had conversed with some of the leading Reformers of Germany, and had expressed some slight favour for the writings of Erasmus. He certainly was not such a lover of the reformed doctrines as their maintainers would care to claim. In one of his letters from Germany, he remarks, "I am busy with preaching, having this for my object,

that if I cannot reclaim the Germans from error, I may at least preserve the Spaniards from infection." When he returned to Spain, he brought with him a work in manuscript, which he had expressly prepared for the press, in refutation of the writings of Melancthon. Such was the victim pounced upon by the suspicious familiars of the Inquisition on a charge of heresy. In vain did he appeal to his writings and discourses against the Reformers, and what is more singular, as one writer on the subject remarks, "in vain did the Emperor interpose to stop the process, banish the Inquisitor-General from Seville, and signify his displeasure against the other members of the council of the Supreme. Virves was kept in the secret prisons for four years, during which, to use his own words, 'he was occupied, without breathing or respite, with charges, replies, rejoinders, depositions, defences, arguments, acts, (words, the very utterance of which made him shudder) errors, heresies, schisms, blasphemies, anathemas.' At last, in 1537, a definitive sentence was pronounced, condemning him, as suspected of holding the errors of Luther, to make a formal abjuration, to be absolved *ad cautelam*, to be confined in a monastery for two years, and to be prohibited from preaching for other two years. He was accordingly obliged to abjure, on the day of his *auto-da-fe* in the metropolitan church of Seville, all the heresies of Luther in general, and those in particular which he was suspected of entertaining. The Emperor procured a brief from the Pope, absolving his favourite preacher from the remaining pains of censure; but when he afterwards presented him to the bishopric of the Canaries, it was with the utmost reluctance that his Holiness granted the bull of confirmation to a man who had incurred the suspicion of heresy in the eyes of the Inquisition. 'Many have adopted the maxim,' says Virves, speaking of the proper manner of converting heretics, 'that it is lawful to abuse a heretic by word and writing, when they

have it not in their power to kill or torture him. If they get a poor man, whom they can persecute with impunity, into their hands, they subject him to a disgraceful sentence; so that, though he prove himself innocent, and obtain an acquittal, he is stigmatized for life as a criminal. If, on the other hand, the unhappy person has fallen into error through inadvertence, or the conversation of those with whom he associated, his judges do not labour to undeceive him by explaining the doctrine of Scripture, soft persuasion, and paternal advice, but, in spite of the character of fathers to which they lay claim, have recourse to the prison, the torture, chains, and the axe. And what is the effect of these horrible means? All these torments inflicted on the body can produce no change whatever on the dispositions of the mind, which can be brought back to the truth only by the word of God, which is quick, powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword."

The reader cannot but be struck with the force of these remarks, coming from a Spanish ecclesiastic of that period. The Inquisition, however, increased in vigilance and cruelty, undeterred alike by royal and popular opposition. The progress of the art of printing, and the frequent introduction of heretical books into Spain, in defiance of their utmost vigilance, led to the custom of domiciliary visits by the familiars of the Inquisition to private houses, and the terrors of spiritual despotism were at length extended to their utmost limits, when confessors and preachers of every order were required by them to enforce on their hearers the *obligation of informing against themselves and others, under the pain of incurring mortal sin!*

Against this terrible barrier, reared against the approaches of truth, it demanded a mind of no ordinary courage and daring to stand forth as the first advocate of the doctrines of the Reformation. It seemed, indeed, as though the first efforts at independent thought must be

crushed in the bud under such a system, and the enslaved captives for ever perish unconscious of the darkness that surrounded them, and altogether ignorant of the light beyond. One, however, at length appeared to raise the standard of truth even within the magic circle of that dread influence.

Rodrigo de Valer, a Spaniard of noble birth, was born and brought up in the neighbourhood of Seville. Of a gay and lively disposition, he entered freely into the course of life which was then common among young men of his own rank in Spain. He resided chiefly at Seville, and spent his time among its idle and dissipated nobles and gentry, exercising his ingenuity in surpassing them in their own frivolous occupations. "The love of dress," says Dr. M'Crie, "and of horses and sports, engrossed his attention; and in Seville, which was his favourite residence, he shone in the first rank among the young men of fashion in every scene of amusement and feat of gallantry." Little is known of the circumstances that influenced the remarkable change of mind that followed. The struggles of conscience, the desire for instruction, the source of enlightenment, can all only be guessed at. Certain it is, however, that he who had been the gay gallant of Seville, the leader of fashion, and the foremost actor in every scene of revel and dissipation, suddenly withdrew himself from the circles in which he had heretofore been the admired leader. It was an occurrence well calculated to excite astonishment and inquiry among the thoughtless crowd of fashion. He was still in the full vigour of youth, and in the enjoyment of an ample fortune. The world was before him with all its attractive allurements, and the votaries of dissipation felt that the thirst for pleasure was excited rather than appeased by its enjoyment. Yet they suddenly beheld him discard his splendid equipage, and exchange his costly attire for a simple and unattractive garb; while, disappearing from their gay circles, he

courted solitude, and spent the chief portion of his time in study and meditation. "Had he become unexpectedly pious," says the same author from whom we have already quoted, "and immured himself in a convent, his conduct would not have excited general surprise among his countrymen; but to retire from the world, and yet to shun those consecrated abodes, the choice of which was viewed as the great and almost exclusive mark of superior sanctity, appeared to them unaccountable on any other supposition than that of mental derangement. Valer had acquired a slight acquaintance with the Latin language in his youth. He now procured a copy of the Vulgate, the only translation of the Bible permitted in Spain; and having by dint of application, by day and by night, made himself master of the language, he, in a short time, became so well acquainted with the contents of the Scriptures, that he could repeat almost any passage in them from memory, and explain it with wonderful promptitude and intelligence. Whether he had any other means of instruction, or what these were, must remain a secret; but it is certain that he was led to form a system of doctrine not different from that of the reformers of Germany, and to lay the foundations of a church in Seville which was Lutheran in all the main articles of its belief."

It was only, however, while he was searching for truth, and groping amid the unaided struggles of a mind longing for divine teaching, that Valer secluded himself from his former associates, and avoided all intercourse with the world. So soon as he had instructed himself in the knowledge of the Scriptures, and was able to give a reason for his faith, he boldly returned to society, animated with the desire of imparting to others that knowledge of divine truth which now pervaded his own mind and influenced all his conduct. For the votary of pleasure to return to the gay circles of fashion as the preacher of truth and righteousness, would demand, even in our own day, no

ordinary degree of moral courage. How fearless then must the fortitude have been, and how lively the faith, that animated this Spanish convert to face not only 'the world's dread laugh,' the scorn and ridicule of his former associates, but all the terrors of the Inquisition, watching to expunge heresy with the tortures of the stake.

Valer appears to have been a man of indomitable spirit and resolution. He courted the society of the clergy, and entered freely into conversation with them on the momentous questions of Christian faith, arguing with them, confuting their dogmas, and boldly refuting the errors of the Romish Church, and the corruptions of its ministers. The reception of such teaching was what might have been anticipated. Some, indeed, yielded to convictions under the teaching of this bold confessor. He numbered disciples among the former gay circles of Seville, who drank in the words of truth from his lips, and who, we doubt not, will be his crown of rejoicing at the great tribunal. But courage and constancy, and the power of Scriptural truth, were all in vain within the magic circle of the Spanish Inquisition. His fate was even, we think, more terrible than that of those who have quenched the violence of fire only by the victory of faith, and won the martyr's crown by the swift pangs of the persecutors' stake. "He was brought before the inquisitors, with whom he maintained a keen dispute on the church, the marks by which it is distinguished, justification, and similar points. On that occasion, some individuals of considerable authority, who had secretly imbibed his sentiments, exerted themselves in his favour. Their influence, joined to the purity of his descent, the station which he held in society, and the circumstance that his judges either believed or wished it to be believed that he was insane, procured for him a milder sentence than that jealous and inexorable tribunal was accustomed to pronounce. He was dismissed with the loss of his property. But neither

confiscation of goods, nor the fear of a severer punishment, could induce Valer to alter his conduct. He yielded so far to the importunities of his friends as to abstain from a public declaration of his sentiments for a short time, during which he explained to them in private the Epistle to the Romans. But his zeal soon burst through this restraint. He considered himself in the light of a soldier sent on the forlorn hope, and resolved to fall in the breach, trusting that others, animated by his example, would press forward and secure the victory. Resuming his former reproofs of the reigning errors and superstition, he was a second time denounced to the Holy Office, which condemned him to wear a san-benito, and to be imprisoned for life. When conducted, along with other penitents, to the church of St. Salvador, in Seville, to attend public service on festival days, instead of exhibiting the marks of sorrow exacted from persons in his situation, he scrupled not to address the audience after sermon, and to warn them against the erroneous doctrine which they had heard from the preacher, whenever he thought it contrary to the word of God. This of itself would have been reckoned sufficient cause for adjudging him to the flames; but the reasons already mentioned had influence to save him from that fate. To rid themselves in the most quiet way of so troublesome a penitent, the Inquisitors came to the resolution of confining him in a monastery belonging to the town of San Lucar, near the mouth of the Guadalquiver, where, secluded from all society, he died about the age of fifty. His san-benito, which was hung up in the metropolitan church of Seville, long attracted curiosity by its extraordinary size and the inscription which it bore,—'Rodrigo Valer, a citizen of Lebrixa and Seville, an apostate and false apostle, who pretended to be sent of God.' "

We know not the secrets of the prison-house, the dark hours of despondency and fear that may have clouded his protracted solitude, or the cruelty of his persecutors, that

may have unbent that noble spirit; neither can we ever know the triumphant faith that, we doubt not, closed that weary life, and introduced him to the enjoyment of his great reward; but his spirit lingered behind him, and the sincerity and divine source of his faith were proved by the zeal of the disciples who survived him.

CHAPTER V.

THE THREE BROTHERS ENZINAS.

WHILE such scenes were being enacted in the Spanish peninsula as the last chapter records, numerous Spaniards had travelled into different parts of Europe, in the ordinary course of traffic, or in the pursuit of learning, and among these were many who embraced the doctrines of the Reformation. To this we now turn, as another interesting feature in the rise of the principles of Reformation in Spain.

Foremost among those who influenced this movement in their native land while at a distance from it, were the three brothers Enzinas, or Dryander, as they are more generally styled, according to the fashion of the times, which generally translated the names of scholars into their Greek synonymes. "About the year 1540," says M'Crie, "three brothers, Jayme, Francisco, and Juan, sons of a respectable citizen of Burgos, in Old Castile, were sent to study at Louvaine, a celebrated seat of education, to which the Spanish youth had long been accustomed to resort." The influence of education produced the same fruits in the minds of the Spanish students, as it did, more or less generally, throughout Europe, on the revival of learning. Increasing knowledge led to a more ardent thirst for its extension, and to inquiry as to the foundation

on which those dogmas rested that they had been taught to believe.

The University of Louvaine was at that time one of the most liberal encouragers of polite letters among the European schools of learning, and considerable freedom of opinion among the students was the natural result. The young Spaniards indulged freely in the liberty thus accorded to them, and searched, with honest zeal, into the basis of the creed they had been taught by their religious instructors. The consequences may readily be guessed. The celebrated Cassander, a scholar of that period, who, like Erasmus, strove to reconcile the Reformation with the ancient order of things, exercised for a time considerable influence on the students. But their desire for truth was too honest and sincere to pause at any such system of expedients as he advocated, and they soon declared their thorough adherence to the principles of the Reformation.

Juan Enzinas, the youngest of the three brothers, makes little appearance in the subsequent history of the Spanish Reformation. He appears, indeed, to have adopted the Protestant faith with no less earnestness than his brothers, and to have maintained a consistent Christian profession; but the sphere of life in which he was soon fixed prevented him taking any active share in the cause of his fellow-countrymen. He adopted the profession of medicine, which then included the whole range of natural science, and, having settled in Germany, his high attainments recommended him as a fit professor for the University of Marburg. His reputation was maintained by several learned works on medicine and astronomy. He also displayed considerable mechanical skill in the invention and improvement of scientific instruments. Melancthon, in one of his letters, mentions an orrery which he had constructed, and bestows on it special commendations.

Jayme Enzinas, the elder, pursued a very different career. Soon after leaving Spain he had proceeded to Paris, impressed with the high character which its celebrated university had long enjoyed. The standard of scholastic learning, however, was very different at the commencement of that century from what it soon afterwards became, and Enzinas discovered before he had been long there, that the pedantry of the schoolmen, and the endless mazes of useless verbal controversies in which they delighted to engage, were little calculated to gratify one impressed with the love of liberal pursuits, or to satisfy his ardent thirst for knowledge. There were other occurrences of a very different nature which exercised a lasting influence on his opinions, and therefore formed a source of education which he had not calculated on. He had witnessed in his native land the displays of intolerance and cruelty by which the Church of Rome then sought to maintain her sway; but these same scenes assumed a different character when he witnessed them in a foreign land, and practised under other circumstances. There is something in the stern gravity of the Spanish character that cloaks even the atrocities of the native Spaniard with an air of dignity, which, when added to the solemnity of a judicial award, has doubtless often blinded the ignorant multitude to the turpitude of their deeds of bigoted persecution. But when the grave Spaniard witnessed the same acts perpetrated by the gay and frivolous Frenchman, he gazed with unmitigated horror on the scene. His biographer remarks: "It was with the deepest emotion that he beheld the Christian heroism shown by the Protestant martyrs under the cruel treatment to which they were exposed. There was something solemn though appalling, in the composure with which a Spanish assembly witnessed the barbarous spectacle of an *auto-da-fe;* but the wanton ferocity with which a Parisian mob shouted, when the executioner, with his pincers, tore the tongue from the

mouth of his victim, and struck him with it repeatedly in the face, before binding his body to the stake, was disgusting, horrible, and fiendish." Jayme Enzinas did not tarry long in Paris after witnessing such scenes as we have described; he was dissatisfied with the learning of the university, and disgusted with the manners, and he accordingly returned to Louvaine. A remarkable change had taken place in his views. The faith that sustained the Protestant martyrs at the stake was now his own, and he earnestly longed to be made instrumental in introducing the knowledge of Divine truth to his benighted countrymen.

After a brief residence in Louvaine, the elder Enzinas proceeded to Antwerp, to superintend the printing of a catechism which he had drawn up in the Spanish language, in the hope of thereby introducing to his fellow-countrymen the simple truths of the gospel, in such a form as, while suited to the humblest capacity, would also be of that easily portable nature that might most readily elude the vigilance of the familiars of the Inquisition. This it is probable employed the whole of his time during his brief sojourn in Louvaine, and no doubt the catechism was sent forth on its holy mission, though no record has been preserved of this humble messenger of truth from Jayme Enzinas to his fellow-countrymen.

The old citizen of Burgos, when he sent forth his sons to the most renowned foreign universities, destined them for very different duties from that which the eldest was now assuming. He had indeed indulged the hope of seeing one or more of them assume the office of priests, but not to minister by such means to their countrymen. The father, it is probable, was only very imperfectly aware of the changed views of Jayme, and still indulged in sanguine expectations of seeing his advancement to some post of dignity in the church, which was then the only kind of ambition in which a wealthy citizen could indulge with

any degree of hope. In obedience to the old citizen's commands, Jayme proceeded to Italy soon after his visit to Antwerp, and took up his abode in Rome. We know the effect that a visit to the capital of Christendom produced on Luther's mind, and there is good reason to believe that Enzinas was then still better prepared than Luther had been, to appreciate the source of that mystery of iniquity that exhibited itself, in shameless hideousness, around the throne of him who claimed to be the successor of the apostles, and the vicar of Christ.

The consequences of this paternal command are thus related in the history of the Spanish Reformation: —"Nothing could be more contrary to his inclinations than this visit to Italy; but yielding to the dictates of filial duty, he set out, leaving his heart with his brothers and other friends in the Netherlands. To a delicate taste and generous independence of spirit, Jayme Enzinas added a tenderness of conscience and candour of disposition which exposed him to peculiar danger in Italy, at a time when the jealousy of the priests was roused by the recent discovery that the reformed tenets had spread extensively in that country. After spending several years in great uneasiness of mind, without being able to procure liberty from his father to return, he resolved at last, in compliance with the urgent request of his brothers, to repair to Germany, and was preparing to quit Rome, when he was betrayed by one of his countrymen, who denounced him as a heretic to the Inquisition. The circumstance of a Spaniard being accused of Lutheranism, together with the character which he bore for learning, attracted much interest in Rome; and his examination was attended by the principal bishops and cardinals. Undaunted by the solemnity of the court, he avowed his sentiments, and defended them with such spirit that his judges, irritated at his boldness, condemned him instantly to the flames; a sentence which was loudly called for by such of his countrymen as were present.

Attempts were afterwards made to induce him to recant, by the offer of reconciliation to the church upon his appearing publicly with the san-benito, according to the custom of his native country. But he refused to purchase his life on such conditions, and died at the stake with the utmost constancy and courage. His martyrdom happened in the year 1546."

The same author furnishes a most interesting narrative of the fate of Juan Diaz, a dear friend of Jayme Enzinas, and one who was early won to a knowledge and reception of the truth by the teaching and example of his companion and fellow-student. He devoted himself with enthusiastic ardour to the study of the Scriptures, and made himself master of the Hebrew tongue, in order that he might be able to peruse the Old Testament in the original. He became afterwards a highly esteemed friend of the learned Bucer, and was, at his request, conjoined with him in a deputation which was sent to Ratisbon, in 1546, to hold a conference on certain disputed points of religion. The haughty spirit of the Spanish nation is strikingly illustrated in the exclamation of Pedro Malvenda, one of his fellow-countrymen whom he met with on that occasion. He expressed the utmost astonishment and horror, on learning of his change of views, and exclaimed, "The heretics will boast more of making a convert of a single Spaniard, than of ten thousand Germans." The information was received in the same spirit of pride and bigotry by his own brother Alphonso. With malignant duplicity, however, he concealed the nature of his sentiments towards Juan, and winning his unsuspecting brother to perfect confidence by professions of warm affection, he engaged a hired assassin, and himself guarded the door while the mercenary villain—far less criminal than himself—entered his brother's apartment, and with one blow of an axe dispatched his victim, and thereby wiped away from his family the disgrace of an apostate to Protestant heresy.

The deed was not only left unpunished, but gained for the fratricide a ready welcome both at Rome, and after his return to Spain; but the spirit of that faith that could produce such fruits abundantly proves its source, and manifests its fitness for such a tribunal as that of the Spanish Inquisition.

Francisco Enzinas was the name of the third brother, and the one who, though we mention him last, exercised the greatest influence on his native country. His attachment to the Reformation was no less early and sincere than that of his elder brother. He continued, however, to reside at Louvaine, and pursued his studies there, while his brother Jayme proceeded on his journey to Italy, from which he never returned. "Among the learned Protestants in the neighbourhood," says the historian of the Spanish Reformation, "with whom he carried on a confidential correspondence, were Albert Hardenberg, preacher to the Cistercian monastery at Adwert, which, since the days of John Wessel, the Dutch Wicliffe, had resembled an academy more than a convent; and the celebrated Polish nobleman, John a Lasco, who had left his native country from attachment to the reformed faith, and was eminently successful in diffusing the knowledge of the truth in East Friesland. It would appear that the parents of Enzinas had intended him for the army, to which he was now decidedly averse. In a letter to A Lasco, accompanying the present of an ancient and richly-mounted sword, which he had received from a nobleman, he says: 'All the world will, I know, be in arms against me on account of the resolution which, in opposition to the advice of some worthy men, I have now formed to devote myself to literary pursuits. But I will not suffer myself, from respect to the favour of men, to hold the truth in unrighteousness, or to treat unbecomingly those gifts which God in his free mercy has been pleased to confer on me, unworthy as I am.'"

Animated by this resolution, he resolved on leaving Louvaine, where he found himself constrained by many opposing circumstances. Even the freedom of intercourse which he enjoyed with the professors of the university, in consequence of the high abilities he displayed, served only to render his position the more irksome to him, as he could not converse freely with teachers from whose opinions he was daily becoming more estranged. He at length determined on going to Wittenberg, the great centre of the reformation movement, where he looked forward to meeting with teachers who held principles in common with those which he had adopted after earnest inquiry for the truth; and with whom, therefore, he could hope to carry on a perfect and confidential intercourse. Melancthon appears to have been an especial object of his admiration, and he applied to the Polish nobleman already referred to, to obtain for him introduction to him, as well as to Luther, and others of the most eminent teachers of that celebrated university. On his arrival at Wittenberg, he was received by Melancthon with open arms, and met with a very hearty reception from the chief friends of the reformation there. His stay, however, was brief; and it has been supposed, that it was by the advice of Melancthon that he quitted it to proceed to Mayence, where he was desirous of completing a translation of the New Testament into the Spanish language, and having it printed for extensive distribution among his benighted countrymen.

Spain, it appears, had already more than once been favoured with the inestimable blessing of the word of God, by the labours of different zealous converts to Bible Christianity, but so indefatigable were the agents of the Inquisition, that they were suppressed almost as speedily as published, and of nearly all of them, not a single copy remains.

From Mayence, Enzinas removed after a short time to Antwerp, from whence he shortly forwarded to his friends

at Louvaine, a translation of the New Testament into the Castilian tongue.

The discussions that followed among those to whom this work was submitted suffice to show the impossibility of removing the objections of those who are opposed to the dissemination of truth. "The private friends of the translator, who were acquainted with both languages, gave it as their opinion, after examining the work, that it would be a great honour as well as benefit to Spain. It was accordingly printed at Antwerp in the year 1543, under the title of 'The New Testament, that is, the New Covenant of our only Redeemer and Saviour Jesus Christ, translated from Greek into the Castilian language.' The purblind monks, to whom it was submitted before publication, could not proceed farther than the title-page. One of them, whose pretensions to learning were not the least among those of his order, smelled Lutheranism in 'the new covenant.' The leaf was cancelled, and the suspicious phrase struck out. He next pointed out a palpable heresy in the expression 'our *only* Redeemer.' Recourse was again had to the operation of cancelling, and the obnoxious particle expelled. But his success in discovery only served to quicken the censorial organ of the monk; so that the author, despairing to see an end of the process, gave directions for putting the work into the hands of the booksellers.

The Emperor having soon after arrived at Brussels, the author presented a copy of the work to him, and requested his permission to circulate it among his countrymen. Charles received it graciously, and promising his patronage, if it were found to contain nothing contrary to the faith, gave it to his confessor, Pedro de Soto, to examine. After various delays, Enzinas, having waited on the confessor, was upbraided by him as an enemy to religion, who had tarnished the honour of his native country; and refusing to acknowledge a fault, was seized by the officers of jus-

tice and thrown into prison. Besides the crime of translating the Scriptures, he was charged with having made a translation of a work of Luther, and of visiting Melancthon. To add to his distress, his father and uncles, hearing of his imprisonment, paid him a visit, and participating in the common prejudices of their countrymen, reproached him for bringing calamity on himself, and dishonour on his kindred."

This happened while his brother Jayme was yet a free student at Rome, so that he was the first of these noble brothers who suffered in the cause of truth. He was undaunted, however, in the midst of danger. He retained perfect self-command and peace of mind, relying on the goodness of his cause, and the sure hope which his persecutors could not take away from him. He had many friends in Brussels who felt a deep interest in him, of whom it is stated by one of his biographers, he knew more than four hundred who were devoted adherents of the Protestant faith.

The enemies of truth, and particularly those of his own countrymen who were attached to the court, were watching with malignant gratulations the captivity of Enzinas, and flattering themselves that by such means the progress of the Reformation might be effectually stayed. But at that very time Melancthon, in writing from Wittenberg to his friend Camerarius, exclaims, "Our Spanish friend Franciscus has returned, being set free by a Divine interposition, without the help of any man, so far as he knows at least."

It was indeed worthy of being called a Divine interposition. He had lingered on in captivity for above fifteen months, and at the very time when a fierce persecution was being carried on throughout the Netherlands against all who adhered to the Protestant doctrines, or expressed a doubt of the superstitious dogmas of Popery, and large rewards were offered for the apprehension of the Protestant

preachers, he suddenly found his prison doors unlocked one morning, and walking out undiscovered, he hastily fled from Brussels, and reached his friends at Wittenberg in safety. The Inquisitors were filled with the utmost indignation on learning of his escape.

Melancthon remarks to the same correspondent already referred to:—"These Inquisitors are as cruel to us as the thirty tyrants were of old to their fellow-citizens at Athens; but God will preserve the remnant of his church, and provide an asylum for the truth somewhere."

Of the course pursued by Enzinas thereafter we are left in some uncertainty. It appears from another letter of Melancthon that he had resolved on going to Italy after his escape from Brussels, but there is considerable doubt as to whether he attempted to carry it into execution. The probability is that he did not, as the news of his brother's martyrdom at the hands of the Inquisitors of Rome must have reached him about that very time, and while it would remove one great motive for the journey, was no doubt little calculated to encourage the thought of visiting a scene of painful associations, beset by such terrible dangers. The probability rather is, that he spent the next two years in company with his friends and brethren at Wittenberg, as at the end of that time we find him proceeding to England with letters from Melancthon to the pious young King, Edward VI., and to Cranmer. On his arrival there he obtained an appointment at Oxford as a distinguished scholar, but his stay was brief, and he soon afterwards returned to the continent.

Meanwhile the translation of the Scriptures by Enzinas found its way to Spain, notwithstanding all the opposition of the Inquisitors; and such was the avidity with which it was read and inquired for by the people, that anathemas and Papal bulls were at length issued against the reading of these prohibited books, and the Inquisitors were exhorted to proceed with the utmost rigour against all who

dared to retain the Bible in their hands. Doubtless, in this respect, Francisco Enzinas was an apostle, and preacher of the truth as it is in Jesus, to multitudes of his fellow-countrymen, who, but for his devoted heroism and Christian zeal on their behalf, might have perished in the darkness and ignorance of their enslaved country.

Of the circumstances that attended the closing years of his life less is known. He resided occasionally in different university towns of Germany, and spent his time chiefly in literary pursuits, and in the translation of works into his native tongue, for the benefit of his countrymen. He is believed to have died at Basle, about the year 1570, beloved and mourned for by all those who rejoiced in the great work of reformation which he had so zealously laboured to promote, and held in the highest estimation by all the most learned men in whose society he mingled.

With this biographical notice of one of the best of the reformers of Spain, we close the illustrations of a period so remarkable in the annals of that unhappy country. Thousands perished at the stake, and by cruel tortures in the dungeons of the Inquisition. Thousands more escaped into exile, rather than abandon the truth. Yet still the work went on. Immense numbers of copies of the Scriptures, and of catechisms and religious treatises, were secretly introduced into that kingdom, and the great day of account will alone disclose the numbers of those who embraced the truth and triumphed in believing, in defiance of persecutions.

The Inquisitors, however, were the victors for a time. Spain, which had been the proudest empire of Europe, whose navies covered the ocean, whose armies struck terror into the nations, and whose merchants traded to the new-discovered limits of the known world, —this great and mighty empire, exchanged for all these substantial glories, the triumph of bigotry and intolerance, and her enslaved sons have reaped the fruit of such doings in ages of degra-

dation and suffering. A great struggle has long rent that unhappy kingdom; brother has risen against brother, and it has been cruelly shaken by intestine divisions and civil wars. But there is more hope in this than in the torpor that preceded it. The dominant Church of Rome and the power of the Inquisition have felt the same blow that prostrated the civil rulers. We trust that there is still good in store for Spain. English Christians are following up the work of Enzinas, and thousands of Spanish Bibles have been and still are, distributed through the land.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BIBLE IN SPAIN.

It is a singular feature in the religious history of Spain, which the reader of the preceding chapters must have been impressed with, that, noble as have been the self-denying efforts of some of her sons for the dissemination of the truth, it has yet had no really great reformer, to guide onward in the path to reformation. This fact becomes the more remarkable when we consider the history and character of the people. Their literature boasts of a Lope de Vega, a Calderon, and a Cervantes, with many others of high and honourable repute. A Ferdinand, Gonsalvo, and many other worthy names, appear among their generals. The glory and first-fruits of the discoveries of the great Columbus were theirs. The honour—such as it is—of the founding of the order of Jesuits is theirs. When placed beside the Loyolas, the Xaviers, and other devoted sons of that gigantic and unscrupulous auxiliary of Rome, we feel indeed the absence of a Wicliffe, a Huss, or a Luther, for Spain. Yet we are compelled to ask, after mature reflection, what could even the

heroism of Luther, or the devoted zeal of Huss, have effected against the dread emissaries of the Inquisition? Even the terrible cruelties of Mary of England's reign, assume something of an appearance resembling the forms of justice, when contrasted with the demoniacal tortures of that awful tribunal; perpetrated in secret and in silence, with all the calm passionless horrors of a malignant fate; whose deeds were presided over by the spirit of evil; against which there was no appeal, and with which there could be no hope. Some such conviction as this seems to have influenced the Spanish reformers at every period. The Bible has been the sure messenger of truth to which they have turned with hope, since ever the grand discovery of the printing-press achieved the power of multiplying it, as a missionary to go forth bearing the Gospel to every creature.

The same motives which we have seen influencing the Spanish Christians of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, have guided the exertions of English Christians in our own day. We shall close this sketch of the Reformers of Spain with a few extracts from the narrative of that singularly interesting traveller, George Borrow, illustrative of his labours in this cause.

On his second visit to Spain, he experienced a singularly providential escape from shipwreck, after the captain and crew of the vessel had abandoned all hope. He thus describes his arrival at Madrid, and his subsequent labours there:—"On my arrival at Madrid, I took up my lodgings in the Calle de Santiago, in the vicinity of the palace. The name of the hostess was Maria Diaz, of whom I shall take the present opportunity of saying something in particular.

She was a woman of about thirty-five years of age, rather good-looking, and with a physiognomy, every lineament of which bespoke intelligence of no common order. A Spaniard, and, of course, a Catholic, she was

possessed of a spirit of toleration and liberality which would have done honour to individuals much her superior in station. In this woman, during the remainder of my sojourn in Spain, I found a firm and constant friend, and occasionally a most discreet adviser. She entered into all my plans, I will not say with enthusiasm, which, indeed, formed no part of her character, but with cordiality and sincerity, forwarding them to the utmost of her ability. She never shrank from me in the hour of danger and persecution, but stood my friend, notwithstanding the many inducements which were held out to her by my enemies to desert or betray me. Her motives were of the noblest kind - friendship, and a proper feeling of the duties of hospitality: no prospect, no hope of self-interest, however remote, influenced this admirable woman in her conduct towards me. Honour to Maria Diaz, the quiet, dauntless, clever Castilian female! I were an ingrate not to speak well of her, for richly has she deserved a eulogy in the humble pages of 'The Bible in Spain.'

One of my first cares was to wait on Mr. Villiers, who received me with his usual kindness. I asked him whether he considered that I might venture to commence printing the Scriptures without any more applications to government. His reply was satisfactory: 'You obtained the permission of the government of Isturitz,' said he, 'which was a much less liberal one than the present. I am a witness to the promise made to you by the former ministers, which I consider sufficient. You had best commence and complete the work as soon as possible, without any fresh application; and should any one attempt to interrupt you, you have only to come to me, whom you may command at any time.' So I went away with a light heart, and forthwith made preparation for the execution of the object which had brought me to Spain.

I shall not enter here into unnecessary details, which could possess little interest for the reader; suffice it to

say that, within three months from this time, an edition of the New Testament, consisting of five thousand copies, was published at Madrid. It was brought out in a handsome octavo volume, and presented, upon the whole, a rather favourable specimen of Spanish typography.

The mere printing, however, of the New Testament at Madrid could be attended with no utility whatever, unless measures, and energetic ones, were taken for the circulation of the sacred volume.

The Christians of England had already made considerable sacrifices in the hope of disseminating the word of God largely among the Spaniards, and it was now necessary to spare no exertion to prevent that hope becoming abortive. Before the book was ready I had begun to make preparations for putting a plan into execution, which had occupied my thoughts occasionally during my former visit to Spain, and which I had never subsequently abandoned. I had mused on it when off Cape Finisterre in the tempest—in the cut-throat passes of the Morena—and on the plains of La Mancha, as I jogged along a little way ahead of the Contrabandista.

I had determined, after depositing a certain number of copies in the shops of the booksellers of Madrid, to ride forth, Testament in hand, and endeavour to circulate the word of God amongst the Spaniards, not only of the towns, but of the villages—amongst the children not only of the plains, but of the hills and mountains. I intended to visit Old Castile, and to traverse the whole of Galicia and the Asturias—to establish Scripture depôts in the principal towns, and to visit the people in secret and secluded spots —to talk to them of Christ, to explain to them the nature of his book, and to place that book in the hands of those whom I should deem capable of deriving benefit from it. I was aware that such a journey would be attended with considerable danger, and very possibly the fate of St. Stephen might overtake me; but does the man deserve the

name of a follower of Christ who would shrink from danger of any kind in the cause of Him whom he calls his Master? 'He who loses his life for my sake shall find it,' are words which the Lord himself uttered. These words were fraught with consolation to me, as they doubtless are to every one engaged in propagating the Gospel in sincerity of heart, in savage and barbarian lands."

Animated by these bold and extensive schemes of operation, projected in full reliance on the protection and aid of an over-ruling Providence, George Borrow proceeded with his labours, and was rewarded with the utmost success in the dissemination of the Scriptures. It was not to be expected, however, that such proceedings would be allowed to be carried on unnoticed in Spain.

"About the middle of January," he says, "a swoop was made upon me by my enemies, in the shape of a peremptory prohibition from the political governor of Madrid to sell any more New Testaments. This measure by no means took me by surprise, as I had for some time previously been expecting something of the kind, on account of the political sentiments of the ministers then in power. I forthwith paid a visit to Sir George Villiers, informing him of what had occurred. He promised to do all he could to cause the prohibition to be withdrawn; but unfortunately at this time he had not much influence. I, however, never lost confidence in the Almighty, in whose cause I was engaged.

Matters were going on very well before this check. The demand for Testaments was becoming considerable, so much so that the clergy were alarmed, and this step was the consequence. But they had previously recourse to another, well worthy of them; they attempted to act upon my fears. One of the ruffians of Madrid, called Manolos, came up to me one night, in a dark street, and told me that unless I discontinued selling my 'Jewish books,' I should have a knife '*nailed in my heart;*' but I

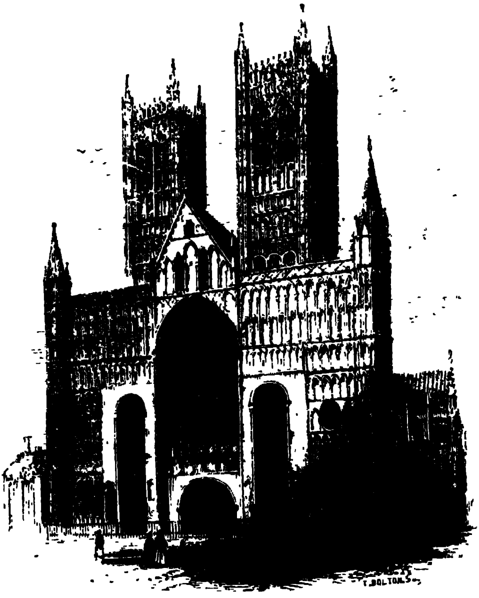
told him to go home, say his prayers, and tell his employers that I pitied them; whereupon he turned away with an oath. A few days after, I received an order to send two copies of the Testament to the office of the political governor, with which I complied, and in less than twenty-four hours an alguazil arrived at the shop with a notice prohibiting the further sale of the work.

One circumstance rejoiced me. Singular as it may appear, the authorities took no measures to cause my little despacho to be closed, and I received no prohibition respecting the sale of any work but the New Testament, and as the Gospel of St. Luke, in Rommany and Basque, would within a short time be ready for delivery, I hoped to carry on matters in a small way till better times should arrive.

I was advised to erase from the shop windows the words 'Despacho of the British and Foreign Bible Society.' This, however, I refused to do. Those words had tended very much to call attention, which was my grand object."

We need not follow the courageous agent of Bible dissemination further. He was imprisoned for a time among the felons of the great prison of Madrid, but he finally triumphed. Ages hence will probably reap the fruits of his labours in revealing anew the Bible, the earliest and surest reformer of Spain. The Book of Truth is now eagerly coveted throughout that land, many even among the priests encourage and aid in its distribution. It has found free course where it was so long forbidden access; nor can we doubt that its influence will be felt in raising again that degraded people from the long torpor of ignorance and moral degradation, to the glorious liberty of the children of God, the surest basis of the civil liberty which is the birthright of every child of Protestant England.

ROBERT GROSTESTE.



Lincoln Cathedral

THE subject of this narrative, in his later days, was often taunted by his adversaries with his mean descent, and he acknowledged it with honest frankness, as one who remembered that greater than he—even the Apostles of Christ—had no higher ancestry; and that Christ himself was despised as the Son of a carpenter.

Among this poore folk there dwelt a man
Which that was holden poorest of them all;
But highe God sometime senden can
His grace unto a little ox's stall.—CHAUCER.

One writer anxiously represents Grosteste as come of gentle and knightly kin—his paternal surname, Copley; but the life of Grosteste has internal evidences to the contrary. The best authority on this subject, Samuel Pegge, inclines to think he was born about 1175, of low and obscure, but honest parentage, at Strodbrooke, now Stradbrook, in the county of Suffolk. But Pegge does not speak positively of any fact concerning his origin, and we see no reason for disbelieving the touching tradition told by Richard of Bardney, a monkish biographer of Robert Grosteste, that he was put to school by the mayor of the city of Lincoln, who found him begging at his door, and whose heart was captivated by the boy in some conversation he had with him.

From the commencement to the close of his life, Robert Grosteste was, in the loftiest sense of the term, *a student*. To understand his character aright, we must watch its progressive development from knowledge to knowledge, truth to truth, strength to strength.

The life of man has often been compared to the day, with its morning, its noon, its evening, and its night. The comparison is peculiarly beautiful and true as applied to the studious life of Robert Grosteste; his morn was full of glorious promise, not a cloud dimmed its pure, animating glow; his noon was fervid and powerful; his evening set amid thick rolling clouds, but *he* was serene, majestic, glorious, as the sun departing to shine on other worlds.

Let us view him in the bright morning of his public career, when his mind newly unfolded its vast powers, when he acquired the rudiments of his varied attainments. These, we are told, included the whole encyclopædia; logic, ethics, politics, economics, the various branches of natural philosophy—as the doctrine of the sphere, of comets, the rainbow, the air, catoptrics, light, motion—together with arithmetic, geometry, music, and the learned languages; medicine, and ecclesiastical law; astronomy, and meta-

physics; and, as the crown of all the rest, theology, and a consummate acquaintance with the Scriptures.

Gratuitous religious teachers in most of these branches of knowledge were to be found at Oxford. He learned Hebrew from Jews established in Jewries there since the reign of William the Conqueror. Roger Bacon, who was perhaps the chief purely intellectual light of that age, as Grosteste was the chief purely moral light, says that his great master, Bishop Robert, could translate from the Greek and Hebrew, and was very careful to obtain good assistants in these tongues.

Robert's study of the Greek language is the most remarkable feature of his early scholastic life.

A distinguished antiquarian student says, in one of his works, "The first time that we hear anything material concerning the Greek language in this country, was in the reign of Henry the Eighth, when its introduction made no small bustle at Oxford. It was considered by many as a dangerous and alarming innovation, so different in all respects from the old school learning, both as to character and sound, that the students no doubt saw and heard them with astonishment, and treated them, as Shylock says, in Shakespeare, as 'such abominable words as no Christian could venture to hear.' The university became divided into two factions, Greeks and Trojans, who bore a violent hostility to each other. Erasmus, one of the first who then patronised the Greek language, and read lectures upon it in the schools, was insulted by the Trojan party."

This state of things existed about 1535, three hundred years after Grosteste. It is therefore not a little extraordinary and characteristic to find *him* a Greek student. An antiquarian authority, speaking of Geoffrey Chaucer, says, "He must have been perfectly innocent of Greek, for he was gathered to his fathers about a century before it was understood in England as an independent language."

Yet Chaucer died in 1400, Grosteste in 1253, and Grosteste understood Greek. The paramount importance of this noble and beautiful language, the key to the original gospels, and the most consummate works of art, adds a deep interest to this fact.

When Grosteste went to Oxford, he found there only second-hand translations of a few Greek authors, taken from Arabic versions; for, all through Europe, sound learning had slept as if it would wake no more, during those barbarous ages which followed the devastation of the Roman empire. The conquests of the Saracens after the Crusades, were the first means of revival, by the usual order of overruling Providence, bringing good out of evil. Among the Saracens themselves were many learned men; and, besides, they caused the dispersion of enlightened Greeks, who fled into this part of Europe, bringing with them their literary collections. Whether young Robert's Greek tutor was one of these forced exiles, or whether he was one of those philosophers, who we find now and then came to England from Athens, to learn or teach some new thing, does not appear; but he was named Nicholas the Greek, and is stated, in one of Grosteste's own manuscripts, to have been a Greek both by nation and language. He was a man of fortune, and seems, from his earliest intimacy with his gifted pupil, to have attached himself warmly to him.

We have no evidence that the university at this time manifested that bitter prejudice against the Greek language, which we have seen disgraced its annals in the time of Erasmus; but there can be little doubt that Grosteste also would differ from Oxford Trojans, for that is a race which unfortunately is never extinct. Established ignorance is always unwilling to be disturbed, and especially when clothed in the solemn garb of authority. The daring young scholar, who could so far diverge from the beaten paths, was viewed, of course, as a prodigy for this achieve-

ment, which stamped his originality and mental power in the public estimation; but many would disapprove, and few care to follow in his footsteps.

Whilst still a very young student, we find Robert at Paris; the fame of whose university has already been frequently referred to. Paris is said to be still the paradise of literary men, from the facilities it affords for their pursuits; and at that period, Grosteste must have found a residence there truly delightful. There he conversed with the best minds from all parts of the civilized world, who met for the express purpose of receiving and communicating knowledge. There he had opportunities of borrowing, purchasing, or exchanging manuscripts, those rare and precious means of knowledge. A good manuscript was worth a good horse. A single copy of the Bible, before the discovery of the art of printing, was worth four or five hundred crowns of old money, and therefore twenty times as much in modern coin.

Nicholas, the Greek, was with Grosteste at Paris, and the latter continued his laborious studies of Greek and Hebrew. The French language, we need scarcely remind our readers, was the current language of these kingdoms in the middle ages, and so, there is every probability, would have remained to this hour but for Geoffrey Chaucer. What we now call English, was then in its rudest state, and confined to the lowest orders; but, notwithstanding, it was only at Paris that the French language could be perfectly acquired, in its peculiar grace and refinement. Here then Robert Grosteste attained to that exquisite command of the French language which he exhibits in his writings.

At Paris, it has been said, he received his surname of Grosteste, or Greathead, manifestly a characteristic appellation, according to the general custom in that age; but whether denoting a physical peculiarity, or the greatness of his mental capacities, or both, is not clear. He seems to have been oftenest styled Robert, without the surname.

Returning from Paris, our young student began to lecture in public on philosophy and divinity, and his reputation rose daily. There were at the time crowds of foolish young men about the university, who sought nothing there but freedom from restraint, to shelter their excesses under the university privileges. But Robert seems never to have been drawn aside by the contagion of their example, youth in him was not the twin-brother of error, as it too often is; his mind was constant to its pole-star, wisdom. and he was as noted for his strictly moral conduct, as for his severe studies.

When about the age of twenty-three, William de Vere, Bishop of Hereford, invited Robert to enter his service, and Giraldus Cambrensis, no mean or incompetent judge of Grosteste's abilities, wrote to that prelate a congratulatory letter on the occasion, speaking of the young man with the highest possible encomiums, as exquisitely qualified in every way to assist him. The bishop, however, died in 1199, which must have been before, or very soon after, Grosteste joined him; for the latter, about the age of twenty-four, was again in the University of Oxford, where he remained many years, and where

> Sounding in moral virtue was his speech,
> And gladly would he learn, and gladly teach.

CHAPTER II.

PROGRESS.

In the year 1209, a new bishop was consecrated in Lincoln, a man of eminently pious character, Hugh de Welles, who became the chief patron of the rising scholar of Oxford; which university then formed a part of the vast Lincoln diocese. From this good bishop, or it may be

through his influence, Grosteste was advanced, in the course of ten or twelve years, from a prebendal stall in Lincoln, to four several archdeaconries in different bishoprics; the first of these, we are told, was always filled with great and learned men. The distinction of Master of Arts had previously been conferred on Grosteste, and from this, to the highest academical and ecclesiastical honours, he found a straight path, until, passing over his rectories, and other minor promotions, we find him at last a Doctor of Divinity, and Chancellor of Oxford.

During the former part of this period of steady public progress, a period of twenty years, Grosteste had been especially famous for physical and mathematical learning, and had passed through the dark unpromising labyrinths of what were styled the occult sciences, then exceedingly popular. Great faith was placed in him as an astrologer, and he was marked as "one of those great men who were addicted to the study of natural magic." But we rejoice to find him in his very numerous manuscript tracts on different branches of natural science, decidedly and remarkably in advance of his age in respect to the prevalent illusions; and if he does not quite divest himself of their pernicious influence, we cannot wonder, when we recollect what marvellous effects were wrought by Arabians in this country in the middle ages, to which all writers give testimony. We have never been able to explain, on any known principles of modern science, the magical exhibitions that were wont to be presented in the castle-hall. The East, from which they came, was ever a land of mystery, and such it is to this day, as the most enlightened modern travellers declare. Of late, we have begun to look at these things in a new aspect, not superstitiously, nor contemptuously, but philosophically, conscious that *often superstition covers some valuable truth*, worth the searching scrutiny of the wise.

Occasionally we catch a glimpse of the means employed

to produce the magical effects described in the wild legends of the middle ages. Thus, in the story told by the poet Gower and others,

> For of the great clerk, Grosteste,
> I read how ready that he was
> Upon clergy* a head of brass
> To make, and forge it for to tell
> Of such things as befell,

we discern concealed machinery at work to produce the effect of speech "on Saturday, for the correction of errors, and the giving of counsel in doubtful cases." For Grosteste, among all his other accomplishments, practised ecclesiastical law, and probably temporal also—both being in the hands of the clergy. But, says Gower, the head that he was seven years in making, was destroyed in an instant. One day, as it was being set up, it fell to the ground and broke in pieces. The legend preserves the fragments in a vault of Lincoln Cathedral. Often would the credulous common people gaze in upon those gloomy sepulchral vaults, and wonder in which of them the head was, and frame for it supernatural society out of their excited fancies.

Another legend merits notice for its rude imaginativeness. We also detect in it that brilliant characteristic of the genius of Grosteste—an energy that delighted in grappling with what were impossibilities to common men.

The Bishop of Salisbury, of entirely an opposite description of character, who conjured up difficulties to fret over, instead of to conquer, had promised to officiate at Rome on St. Peter's Day, but was prevented by his bodily infirmities from setting forth. He seems to have suffered the time to slip on, without sending to Rome to state his inability, and on the day before that of his appointment, he sent for Grosteste, his archdeacon, who found him in great distress of mind. "Be of good courage, my lord,"

* By his learning.

said Grosteste cheerfully, "I will undertake to reach Rome this night, and officiate in your stead." So runs the legend, the truth probably being that he undertook to get there in an incredibly short space of time, and, by the force of resolution, accomplished his undertaking. But now we have the embellishment of the monks. They describe his summoning to his assistance, after quitting the bishop's presence, a demon horse, that reminds us of the Steed of Brass of Chaucer, in that marvellous imaginative fragment referred to by Milton — "The Story of Cambuscan bold." The steed of the "Squire's Tale" transported its rider into the most distant regions of the world in the space of four-and-twenty hours; in less than half that time Grosteste's "*Baal*" carries him to Rome. Both flew with the swiftness of an eagle, or stood motionless; vanished on a sudden at command, or returned at their masters' call. The origin of both was twofold—like that of the brazen head—Arabian fiction, and optical and mechanical contrivance.

Mounted on the demon steed, Grosteste ascends into the darkness of space. The horse and rider approach the sun and the planets one after another, rudely anticipating Byron's fine creation of a flight through space in the impious drama of Cain—so true is it there is nothing new under the sun,

> I tread on air, and sink not,
> * * * *
> Oh, thou beautiful
> And unimaginable ether! and
> Ye multiplying masses of increased
> And still increasing lights! What are ye?
> What is this blue wilderness of interminable
> Air, where ye roll along, as I have seen
> The leaves along the limpid streams of Eden?
> Is your course measured for ye? Or do ye
> Sweep on in your unbounded revelry
> Through an aerial universe of endless
> Expansion at which my soul aches to think,
> Intoxicated with eternity?

It has been pleasantly observed of Richard of Bardney, the monkish narrator of this legend in his Latin rythmical life of Grosteste, that "how great an astronomer soever Grosteste may have been, his poet is but a bad one." But, in days when the earth was believed to be the fixed centre of the planetary system, and that all the other heavenly bodies careered about it every twenty-four hours, we are not to look for much accuracy in dealing with the mysteries of the universe.

After travelling through the night among the stars, the demon horse descends swiftly into the midst of the Eternal City, where Grosteste officiates for his bishop, and returns to him the following night.

The invention of such legends by the monks speaks volumes for their benighted state. In fact, betwixt them as a body and the learned clergy, there was a great gulf of the deepest ignorance and the darkest superstition. They attributed to Grosteste the invention of certain magical charms, formulas for commanding spirits, and talismanic characters for gems. They have falsely stated that he wrote on witchcraft and necromancy. We would hope that all they say of him as a magician has no better foundation than had the charge of sorcery brought against the farmer, mentioned by Cressinus—*that he had better crops than his neighbours.* But we are not too confident when we find a great intellectual philosopher like Roger Bacon, so far advanced in most of his views, saying in his immortal "Opus Major," that astrology is the better part of medicine, and making mysterious allusion to a certain optic tube, through which he was able to see *future events.* If such were the delusions of the pupil of Grosteste, it is not greatly to be wondered at if the master was not quite free from them.

Let us now glance at the versatile talents of Grosteste in another, their most pleasing aspect, as devoted to the fine arts.

He was an artist, and adorned his manuscripts with beautiful illuminations.

Himself a minstrel, he delighted to listen to the "metre and music of the minstrels." And he was passionately fond of the harp; so we learn from the old English poet, Robert de Brunne, who, in the reign of Edward I., made a paraphrase, in English, of Grosteste's French or Anglo-Norman Poem, the "Manual of Sins." From De Brunne we extract this pleasing anecdote of Grosteste:

> He loved much to hear the harp,
> For man's wit it maketh sharp,
> Next his chamber, beside his study,
> His harper's chamber was fast thereby.
> Many times, by night and days,
> He had solace of notes and lays.
> One asked him the reason why
> He had delight in minstrelsy?
> He answered him in this mannére
> Why he held the harp so dear:
> "The virtue of the harp, through skill and might,
> Will destroy the fiendes might,
> And to the cross by goode skeyl*
> Is the harpe likened well.
> Therefore, good men, ye still lere,†
> When you any gleeman hear,
> To worship God at your power,
> And David on the sauter,
> In harp, and tabour, and symphon glee,
> Worship God in trumpes and sauter,
> In cords,‡ in organs, and bells ringing,
> In all these worship the heaven's King."

Grosteste was a favourite writer for the harp. His long religious romances, in the easy flowing romance style then universally popular, were doubtless sung in the religious houses, as well as in castle and bower. The Manual of his, just mentioned, was quite in the taste of the times. It treats of the Decalogue and the Seven Deadly Sins, and is illustrated with many legends. De Brunne, a

* Skill. † Learn. ‡ Clavicords.

Gilbertine monk, expressly says, half a century after Grosteste, that he translated this poem to be sung to the harp at public entertainments. French was still the established language of the refined in England, but it was not for the refined De Brunne worked.

> For lewéd* men I undertook
> In English tongue to make this book,
> For many be of such mannere
> That tales and rhymes will blithely hear,
> In games and feastes at the ale†
> Love men to listen, tro tonale.‡

Another romance of the same kind by Grosteste, "The Castle of Love," an allegory of the fall and restoration of man, extends to 1700 verses. It is also written in easy, elegant French. His description of the happiness of man in the state of innocence is very pleasing, and the allegorical castle is vividly and finely drawn.

These romances give the fullest evidence of Grosteste's moral and spiritual progress in *vital* points. He treats in the "Castle of Love" of creation, redemption, the day of judgment, the joys of heaven, the torments of hell, as one habitually living under the consciousness of their reality. There the love of God appears a twin flame in his soul with the love of knowledge.

> We oughten over alle thing
> Worship Him with tru love,

is the main burden of his theme, and his holy hatred of sin as opposed to the love of God, appears both in the "Manual" and in the "Castle of Love," called, from the surpassing importance of the subject, the Roman des Romans, or, the Romance of Romances; the word romance then signifying a lyrical narrative.

The ancient English translation of the Roman des Romans—probably, but not certainly, by De Brunne—begins

* Ignorant. † Ale-house or ale gatherings. ‡ Truth and all.

with a few lines very characteristic of Grosteste's subsequent life:

> That good thinketh good may do,
> And God will help him thereto.

or, The good one thinketh, that good one may do, by relying upon the help of God. These quickening, encouraging words, might almost have been taken for his motto. Quitting unprofitable abstractions, he became a vigorous *practical* reformer:

> For nas never good work wrought
> Without beginning of good thought,
> Ne never was wrought none evil thing,
> That evil thought nas the beginning.

CHAPTER III.

TEACHING.

GROSTESTE'S grand characteristic was *moral* greatness, founded, as it always is, on profound humility. Thus he writes, when Archdeacon of Leicester:—

"Nothing that occurs in your letters ought to give me more pain, than your styling me a person invested with authority, and endued with the lustre of knowledge. So far am I from thinking as you do, that I feel myself unfit even to be the disciple of a person of authority; moreover, in innumerable matters which are objects of knowledge, I perceive myself enveloped in the darkness of ignorance."

How strikingly is this genuine spirit of true modesty invariably manifested most strongly by the greatest minds, who, gazing from the loftier height to which they have attained, see only the more distinctly the vast unbounded regions that lie beyond!

Genuine humility is not a false depreciation of self, but an extension of vision into the dim and vast regions of truth that lie beyond us. Certain it was, this famous clerk, styled so oft a *perfect* philosopher and divine, skilled in *all* knowledges, endowed with *every* virtue, was, nevertheless, "in innumerable objects which are matters of knowledge, enveloped in the darkness of ignorance," and the highest intellectual praise we assign him is, that he was so far advanced that he could perceive it.

He speaks of AUTHORITY with awful reverence. His whole life and being were subjected to Divine authority, so far as his knowledge went. But this was not all. These were days when there were interposed between man and the divine authority, a host of human authorities, rank above rank, so many, so varied, so conflicting, that it was not wonderful, if, amidst superstitious reverence for all, the heart and conscience ceased, in fact, to be controlled by any. But Grosteste strove to obey as well as to reverence—and upon the loftiest moral principles. His faith was entire, till towards the close of his life, in the traditions and constitution of the only church with which he was acquainted, and which no one in England had as yet doubted was the true one. And, for many years, he experienced a singular warfare between his habitual faith in established authority, and his abhorrence of its evils.

John Bunyan—ages after—describing his own experience of this adoration of priestly authority, says, "Had I but seen a priest, (though never so sordid and debauched in his life,) I should find my spirit fall under him, reverence him, and knit unto him; yea, I thought, for the love I did bear unto them, (supposing they were the ministers of God,) I could have laid down at their feet, and have been trampled upon by them—their names, their garb, their works, did so intoxicate and bewitch me."

Grosteste was too sagacious to be blinded to the moral evils which, like poisonous weeds, overran with

prolific growth, all the glowing garden of the Christian world; but he rejoiced in the prospect of a better time, on the advent of the reforming orders of poor friars, or brothers.

John de St. Giles, born at St. Albans, was a celebrated student and professor of medicine at Paris, where he was employed by the French King. Removing to Montpellier, he gave his attention extensively to mental diseases. After that, he was doctor of divinity at Paris; and there, in 1323, he was one day preaching to the people in the manner of the new order of preaching friars, the Dominicans, recommending voluntary poverty, when he came down from the pulpit, and putting on the habit of the black friars, went back to his pulpit, and finished his discourse. Such a man abandoning great wealth, and hazarding a high reputation, to become a poor itinerant preacher, of a class then as generally despised as the early Methodist itinerants were in the eighteenth century, could not but create a great sensation, especially at Oxford, where Giles soon appeared, and was the first lecturer there in two new schools, founded through his influence, for Dominican friars.

Grosteste was deeply interested in the new movement. He saw that the established orders had almost ceased to preach or teach, and that the people were abandoned to ignorance and sin; therefore he welcomed the preaching friars. He saw the monks grown as slothful in learning as in teaching, and therefore hailed the appearance of these studious orders. He saw the clergy steeped in worldliness, and trusted the friars were raised up as an example of conformity to Him who humbled himself and went about doing good.

In 1224 the first Franciscan mission entered England. Four clerks and two lay brothers were headed by an Italian deacon of about forty years of age, named Agnellus Pisanus. He was an illiterate man, of simple manners,

and fervent piety. At Paris he had been father-guardian of the Franciscans, and had established there the first White friary. Francis of Assissi, the founder of the order, himself appointed Agnellus provincial master, or superintendent of England. Agnellus won the esteem of Grosteste, who readily undertook for the Franciscans a similar labour of love to that performed by St. Giles for the Dominicans, lecturing gratuitously to promiscuous assemblies, on philosophy and divinity, in the new building raised by Agnellus at Oxford. This Grosteste continued to do for ten years, and here he was mighty in the Scriptures, and proved a blessing to many inquiring souls that were stumbling among the dark mountains of those benighted times. From time to time he selected a leader to fill his place, from among his talented followers. The principal of these was his dear friend through nearly the whole of his life, Adam de Morisco, whom Roger Bacon couples with Grosteste, as students indeed, standing apart from the herd, penetrating the mazes of things. Adam was a Somersetshire man, "where," says Fuller, "there are plenty of marshes, but Stoke Brent-Marsh, being the principal, is the most probable place of his nativity." In youth, Robert and Adam were fellow-students; he took the habit of a friar, but Grosteste never did. The title of "Illustrious Doctor" was bestowed on Adam, and when he performed his exercise for the dignity, Grosteste took the chair, and delivered an eloquent speech, exhorting him in the most affectionate manner, and speaking in his praise with generous fervour.

We might enlarge on many other admirable men who were closely connected with Grosteste at this bright and happy period, especially Stow, his fellow-countryman, from Suffolk, "a clear interpreter of Scripture,"—who, say the monks, was stricken with sudden death for some injury he had done to the Monastery of St. Albans—Fishacre, from Devonshire, the first Dominican honoured

with the theological doctorate, and who was sure to be seen, carrying about with him, in all places, a translation of his favourite author, Aristotle,—Shirewood, one of the few whom Bacon's difficult judgment could allow to be really an excellent divine,—and Bacon himself, the most eminent among the great men of this early era.

A controversial work of Grosteste's, written during this period, is remarkable as a masterly argument on the chief error of the Jews, concerning the perpetuity of their law; and still more so, as being addressed to a despised and persecuted race, in a spirit of gentle candour, such as was altogether unknown elsewhere. It is an admirable production, and has had many imitators at different periods, but Grosteste's work alone survives, after six hundred years.

Though so energetic, Grosteste was of a weak constitution, and in 1232 an acute fever brought him nearly to the point of death. He then devoted himself more solemnly to the service of God, and gave up all his preferments, except that of prebend of Lincoln. He had a sister, a nun, who wrote to him to inquire after his health, and in reply, he speaks of the step he had taken, piously justifying himself, and hoping she will not grieve about it.

In 1234, Robert Grosteste, and Friar Bacon, are appointed to execute a mandate of the King for the better regulation of Oxford.

The following spring, Grosteste's chief patron, Hugh de Wells, died, and in the summer, Grosteste begins to style himself—"Robert, by divine permission, the poor minister of the church of Lincoln." The mendicant-boy, in the very city where he began his career, wears the mitre of the largest diocese in England; owing his exaltation to no papal, kingly, baronial, or other interest, but to free election, for merit solely.

> "—when a man hath been in poor state,
> And climbeth up and waxeth fortunate,
> And there abideth in prosperity;
> Such thing is gladsome as it thinketh me."—CHAUCER.

CHAPTER IV.

REFORMERS.

At the age of sixty, Robert Grosteste ascended the episcopal throne. He was then, perhaps, the most popular man in England, and, in all that did not compromise his conscience, he acted in a manner to remain so.

He was liberal in his table, hospitable, affable, polite.

One who was a canon in his cathedral, immediately before his election, relates an invaluable anecdote regarding a great feast, given to the King at one of his six furnished palaces; probably that beautiful and extensive one at Lincoln, which was then new, but now lies shrouded in ivy, a romantic ruin, where solemn silence broods from year to year.

The royal guest was magnificently entertained, and, in the freedom of conversation, expressed his wonder that one who was so severe a student, and reported to be of mean lineage, should acquit himself so elegantly on all occasions, that it was remarked by the lay lords.

"Very true," rejoined the bishop, "my descent is but mean; but nevertheless, I have been educated from my youth amongst the brightest exemplars, and the principal characters of the world."

The King desiring further explanation, the bishop continued, "that from his beginning to read the Scriptures, he found those who, from the first original of things to the present time, being prudent, modest, liberal, chaste, and endowed with every other virtue, were able to instruct him by their carriage and manners, no less than if he had seen and conversed with them; and that he had always endeavoured to assimilate himself to those models."

Directed by those models, he enters upon the duties of his office—and we seem to hear him thus addressed:—"Behold, I send an angel before thee, to keep thee

in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared."

In his life-time had passed the whole reign of King John, and the long pontificate of Innocent III., during which England was made a fief of Rome, and left a prey to a thousand oppressions.

Among these were five principal ones —called provisions, appropriations, appeals, benevolences, and clauses of *non obstante*.

By PROVISIONS, the Pope kindly took it on himself to provide for English benefices before they were vacant; in order to place in them persons who would obey his will, when he wanted to draw money from England. By APPROPRIATIONS, he seized upon English church revenues, on various pretences; providing for the cures such persons as pleased him. By APPEALS, he cited whom he would to appear before him, arrogating authority to determine all disputes; his court comprising a complicated law machinery, for the purpose of examining suits, and treating with suitors, who generally fared according to the extent of their purses. By Subsidies, or *Benevolences*, immense sums were collected throughout the kingdom, as "*charity* for the Pope;" and, by clauses of NON-OBSTANTE, he set aside all prior customs, statutes, and rights of every kind, which stood in his way.

These abominable oppressions reached their highest mark during the eighteen years of Bishop Robert's rule, and were often supported, and constantly imitated, by the weak, rapacious, unprincipled Henry III., who was always plotting to escape from the restrictions of the great charter of English liberty, wrung from his father on the plain of Runnimede.

Between the Pope and the King, the nation was exhausted of her resources, robbed of her independence, her very territory for the most part alienated, and, as it seemed, was about to perish. Indeed nothing could have

saved our fair "sceptered isle," which Shakespeare erroneously says, did never "lie at the proud foot of a conqueror," but the national genius powerfully concentrated in such glorious spirits as Robert Grosteste and his patriot friends.

"I dare not," he writes, "for the love of God, confer the care of souls on any person who will not sedulously discharge the office in person. The office itself is of the last importance; it requires a Governor always RESIDENT, who applies himself to it with vigilance, prudence, diligence, and fervour; who preaches the word of the Lord in season and out of season; who exhibits himself an example of good works; who, when he gives salutary admonition, and is not regarded, can grieve and lament; who shakes his hands from holding bribes; who so evidently applies to pious uses the pecuniary fines which he receives for the punishment of faults, that he is perfectly free from all suspicions of selfishness and avarice on that account; who is delighted when he can with a good conscience acquit the accused; whom no prejudice, passion, entreaty, gift, or partiality, can divert from the path of rectitude; who delights in labour, and whose sole desire is to profit souls."

The Rev. Isaac Milner observes:—"He, who in an age of superstition, which afforded so many temptations to venality and corruption, could act according to the spirit of these rules, must have been possessed of the Spirit of Christ, and have been superior to the spirit of the world."

Grosteste began to act upon them even *before* he was consecrated. A monk presented a gay young gentleman, without the tonsure, clothed in scarlet, and wearing a ring; altogether destitute of learning, and desiring a large cure, simply for the profits of it. Grosteste sternly refused. One of the candidate's powerful friends was the King's butler, who wrote a "sharp reproof;" but the new bishop replied only by a calm but firm denial.

The Lincoln diocese, then of vast extent, was one forest of churches and monastic houses. In the city alone, which was never large, though very rich and splendid, there were crowded fifty-two churches, and the remains of monasteries meet you there at this day on every hand.

The condition of all these churches and institutions, as available for what Grosteste had most at heart, the instruction of the people in the Holy Scriptures for the salvation of their souls, was as bad as it could be. There were enormous revenues, multitudes of professors of religion, but the word was verified, "where there is no vision the people perish." Grosteste's designs to remedy this state of things may truly be called *great;* and had he only found others to co-operate with him in carrying out the noble objects he aimed at, they might and would have fully succeeded.

He looked to the Scriptures invariably, but he could not free himself of canonical authority—for he stumbled at that stumbling-stone. His projected reforms were chiefly these:—preaching himself in every part of his diocese; obliging the useless clergy to become useful, or quit their posts; compelling the numerous monks, who abstained from taking priestly orders on purpose to escape the labour, to perform their duty; obliging all to live suitably to their profession, and establishing new rectories and vicarages, to be supplied with settled ministers, wise, holy, and diligent.

He first sent a circular letter to his archdeacons, *recommending* them to reform certain abuses that had crept into the diocese. Next he issued a list of searching inquiries into the state of each parish. Then he journeyed through his diocese, obliging the clergy to meet him at a fixed time and place, where he appeared with a train of friars, humble and laborious; such as they were in the days of their simplicity and sincerity. The clergy had every reason to dread such investigations

as he made, and they indignantly complained that such proceedings were new and unprecedented.

"Every new thing which instructs, improves, and perfects a man, is a new blessing,"[1] was the Bishop's noble reply.

The condition of the monasteries, when he made his visitation to them, may be well understood, when we find him removing at once *seven abbots* and *four priors;* whilst other monks, conscience-stricken, fled before him, either to monasteries of stricter rule, as a voluntary penance, or to houses out of his jurisdiction.

Every one knew that his severities proceeded from motives as pure and transparent as crystal; and what could offended patrons say when he referred them to simple principles of right? "There is no hardship in the case," he writes to the patron of a prior of Kyme, "an insufficient or improper person being only displaced to make room for a better man. The substitute is a worthy man, who did not seek for the preferment, but hath been compelled to accept it."

Utterly fearless of consequences, the Bishop soon opposed the King. A bishop of Hereford was to be elected; Grosteste writes to the Archbishop of Canterbury, charging him upon his conscience, to put a stop to the evil of the King's interference in elections, contrary to Magna Charta. He tells the Archbishop it will be proper for him to write a vigorous letter to the Chapter, to induce them to choose an able prelate, without regarding either the menaces or promises of man, and that he should send two clerks to them to draw their attention to the Charter. He also desires that when the election is over, the strictest inquiry possible might be made as to the manner of conducting it, and the quality of the elected. The Archbishop, a foreigner, forced on Canterbury by Pope Gregory the Ninth, was not accustomed to receive, nor to obey, such directions; they were lost on him, and the King imposed on the see

of Hereford, Peter de Equeblanc, a foreigner, one of the Pope's worst imitators, who even resorted to forgery, to extort money from the English.

The King now requests the Bishop to institute a justiciary of the forest, to the church of St. Peter, in Northampton. The Bishop refuses. "He seeks to sow dissention between the regality and the priesthood," say the King's courtiers. Grosteste hears of this, and writes, meekly requesting his Highness' forgiveness, at least until he is able to explain at their next conference.

It was this meekness and prudence, tempering his stern conscientiousness, which preserved him from the dungeon or the stake, and made his example so admirable.

As if he had been Bishop of England, instead of Lincoln, Grosteste cast his eyes everywhere over the realm, in search of men fit to be overseers of the Church of Christ; and when he had found them, he did not rest until he had seen them placed in a position whereby they might benefit immortal souls. "I conjure you," he writes to a pious and learned ecclesiastic who had refused two elections, "to undertake the burthen,and to receive the honour· for the King, *unless he be out of his senses*, will never oppose your election. Consider, if you do not comply, his Highness will set some contrivance on foot to impose some degenerate and unworthy foreigner upon the church of Durham." And, more anxious for the safety of the realm than its nominal owner, Grosteste urges the peculiar danger of such an appointment there, Durham being a chief bulwark of the marches between England and Scotland.

The Bishop found his bitterest enemies within his own church. Having given notice of his intention to visit his Cathedral, the prebendal churches, and the churches of the common estate; a step of much importance, considering the immense wealth of the Cathedral at this period, and the number and value of its immediate dependencies; William de Tourney, the dean, headed a malevolent re-

sistance; and, with the canons, issued a mandate to their vicars and chaplains, not to obey the Bishop when he visited them. The Bishop now averred, in the most earnest manner, his purity of intention; and protested, if, through weakness and ignorance, he had done anything not strictly canonical, he was willing to recall it on better information; to correct his mistakes, and to make satisfaction. By speech and letter he repeatedly desired them, *in friendship*, to show him his mistakes, in order to his rectifying them. This they would never do, nor even return an answer to his letters. They preached against him to the people, and wrote against him to all the cathedral canons in England. Matthew Paris, prejudiced, like all the monks of the time, against what they called his insults and oppressions, in daring to reform his diocese, narrates, that, as a canon was preaching against him in that most noble fabric, the church at Lincoln, and saying, "If I should not speak, the very stones would cry out," the stone-work of the new tower fell: but in spite of this *miracle*, the Bishop went on prosecuting his cause with vigour. He appointed a day for his arrival in Lincoln, and began his visitation. The dean and canons assembled all the prebendaries in the chapter-house, and on the following Sunday consulted in the Cathedral. The Bishop entered the city on the day fixed. No bells were ringing —no respect shown. The dean, precentor, chancellor, treasurer, and other canons, were set out for Rome— other priests had purposely absented themselves—the laity frowned darkly on him.

The Bishop had to be in London by a certain time. There the canons waited for him. They appealed to the Archbishop, but he, characteristically, preferred neutral ground. The Bishop requested the Pope's legate to effect a reconciliation, but, since Grosteste would not give up his visitation, this was impracticable. The canons drew the King to their side by producing a false founda-

tion charter of the church of Lincoln, exempting them from their bishop's control, vesting the power in the dean, and naming the King for the final settlement of disputes. This is surely one of the most extraordinary forgeries ever committed.

Finally the suit goes to the Pope, at vast expense, and Grosteste travels to Lyons, and obtains a bull, partially in his favour. But the canons refuse him admission into his own chapter-house, and publicly tell him to his face, they bitterly repent having ever elected a bishop of—what? so earnest a zeal for religion?—so disinterested a care to make the church what it should be? no, a Bishop of so *mean an extraction*. As a climax to these sad evidences of corruption hating the light, a secret assassin administers poison to the good Bishop. His hair and part of his skin come off, his nails and teeth are falling out, and he is brought to the edge of the grave. The skill of Friar John de St. Giles restores him.

In the year 1241, Grosteste makes his first noble stand against the papal provisions. A rectory in his diocese has been violently seized by a *provision*, and the King's donation. Grosteste acts decisively; sends two wise friends to reason the matter with his Highness in Wales, and is prepared to use all the thunders of the church if this fail. The person *provided for* magnanimously retires.

We must now speak of the Legate. Henry the Third, offended with some trifling difference with the Archbishop of Canterbury, had been foolish enough to write privately, in 1231, to the Pope, to send him a stout and able Legate; one who might enable him to control the Archbishop and all others who durst oppose him. Otto, or Otho, arrived in consequence, and proved a fearful scourge to the nation. Though apparently on the confines of the grave, for he was extremely old, he seemed to be in a state of more than heathen darkness, in matters of conscience and religion.

In the year 1240, he demanded a vast subsidy for the

Pope from the English clergy. The name of the first contributor is worth preserving—Edmund of Canterbury.

The Bishop of Lincoln viewed Otho as invested with the highest spiritual authority, and desired to obey him; but he found it impossible. A first reverent refusal of a benefice was followed instantly by another request for one for the son of Earl Ferrers, who was under age, and not in orders; the Bishop boldly tells the Legate "his conscience will not permit." And when Otho applies a third time, for a prebend for an Italian clerk, the Bishop replies with a sarcastic allegory, veiling a severe rebuke.

No less than three hundred English livings were disposed of by Otho, for the Pope, the King, himself, or their personal friends, regardless altogether of the spiritual instruction of the flocks.

Pope Gregory the Ninth, on one occasion, to induce the Romans to fight for him against the Emperor Frederick the Second, actually promised them, for their sons and relations, *all the vacant benefices in England*, especially such as belonged to the religious houses, and despatched bulls to the Bishops of Lincoln and Salisbury, and Arch bishop Edmund, to provide *three hundred* Romans with the first benefices vacant, peremptorily forbidding them to dispose of any preferment until the Romans were served.

Frequently did Grosteste cast out of his hand with indignant contempt bulls of this kind, and positively refuse compliance, saying, "If I should commit the care of souls to them, I should be the friend of Satan." The Pope, enraged, excommunicated him, and sent a foreign prelate to take his diocese, but the people drove the intruder away.

The Italians preferred were generally mere boys, ignorant of the English language, and English affairs, and destitute of piety or learning. Most of them lived and died abroad, after securing the revenues, and their successors were appointed before those most concerned in the

matter could have any voice in their election, so that the evil had no limit.

One of Otho's duties for the Pope was to see the Romans suited—no easy task, for they would accept no *poor* benefices.

At last the Legate's extortions, and the insolence of his servants, led to an attack on his life, by a multitude of Oxford students. Thousands sought for him with wild cries. Otho having hid himself in the tower of an abbey church, near Oxford, they cried, "Where is this robber? Come out, thou slave! thou fleecer of the land, and gulf of Roman avarice!" Otho's vengeance was afterwards insatiable. Oxford was interdicted more than a year. Much property of the students was confiscated. They had to solicit pardon in London, barefoot, without hoods and gowns, before they could resume their studies. The affair would have ended worse for Oxford, if Bishop Grosteste had not spiritedly told the Legate, in a public assembly, "that if he would be so cool and candid as to attend to *truth*, he might recollect his own servants had given the first provocation."

The University was never so populous after this affray. The Bishop sought to re-establish it on "the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the head Corner-stone." He wrote, requiring the divinity teachers, "as wise and prudent architects, to lay no stones in the foundation, but such as should be suitable and sufficient to bear the superstructure."

"The fundamental stones are the books of Moses and the prophets, the apostles, and the evangelists; which they rightly laid, when they explained those books to their auditors, by the gift of discerning spirits, according to the sense of the text." He affectionately exhorts them in Christ Jesus to let their morning lectures be upon the "New and Old Testaments only, and not on other matters

compiled by worthy writers, and supposed to conduce to this end."

Roger Bacon speaks of the gross ignorance of the herd of students, and of the number of doctors of great pretensions and small attainments; the Bishop applied the axe to the root of this evil, commanding that none should presume to teach in public, or take degrees, without previous examination.

The administration of justice was often committed to unjust hands. Roger de Lexinton, and his associates, held pleas of blood, or a court for capital crimes, on a Sunday, in Lincoln. The rural dean told them this ought not to be done. They gave him opprobrious language, shut up the door of his house, seized on his effects, with some land he held in trust for his nieces, and some goods of his relations. The Bishop directly wrote to Lexinton. "How strange," he said, "that men of their respectable characters should punish a man for informing them of what was just and right; pleas of blood ought *not* to be held on a Sunday. The canons directed the day should be kept holy—forbade that markets should be held, or pleas prosecuted, or any person be adjudged to death or punishment upon it. The dean ought to have been commended by them, and rewarded for cautioning them against sin ning. He entreated them to have regard to the Sabbath of the Lord."

Pope Gregory died in 1240. One of his latest schemes for extorting money was decidedly ingenious. He sent to the convent of Peterborough to request the allotment of a rectory of a hundred marks a-year, and if it was double he should not dislike it. He would re-grant it to them for the same rent, and they should have the reversion. Supposing this intended for a precedent, as doubtless it was. how many pensions of a hundred marks a year would Gregory have had from English monasteries? The King

crushed this scheme; but the Abbot, having previously opposed it, was so disgraced and ill-treated at Rome, that it caused his death.

Of Gregory's successor, Innocent the Fourth, Grosteste observed, in his last hours:—"Many other popes have afflicted the Church, but this Innocent has enslaved it more than they."

Innocent, being forbidden to send any legate into England, laboured to convert the wandering friars into mercenary papal agents.

In the year 1246, John and Alexander, two lowly friars, appear before the King, meekly beseeching leave to beg charity for the Pope, promising to use no force of any kind. The King consents.

Quitting his presence, they dress superbly, mount fine horses, with rich trappings, and, magnificently attended, ride over the country, demanding twenty shillings a-night (old money) for their entertainment, and threatening with heavy punishments all who venture to murmur. They are charged with bulls to seize all goods and chattels of the clergy who die intestate. The *benevolences* they ask—what a perversion of language—are enormous, and how significant is that fact of a third more being asked from the Italian clergy than from the English.

The friars come to Bishop Grosteste. He, in amazement, wonders of what order or rank they are. Friars, poor friars, they cannot be. They show the papal bull, and demand six thousand marks for his diocese.

"Friars," replied this bold patriot, "this demand, I speak with all reverence to his Holiness, is *dishonourable*, and not to be complied with, because it is impossible to do that. It does not concern me only, but the whole body of the clergy and people of this kingdom. It would therefore be a weak and rash thing, and very absurd in me, to give a definitive answer to it at once, and in an instant, before the *sense of the kingdom* is taken on it."

The successor of Archbishop Edmund at Canterbury, Boniface, "much fitter to follow the banner of Mars than that of the Holy Lamb," was one of the foreign ecclesiastics whom the Pope and the King favoured. In 1247, he returned from Provence, where he had been engaged as a warrior, and seeing, in the Bishop of Lincoln's famous *visitations*, an example that might be turned to account, he forthwith proceeded, in sumptuous state, through the different bishoprics under his control; with the sole view of obtaining procurations, or money for entertainment. He would enter the palaces of the Bishop, asking no leave, and exacting what he pleased from the people of the district. Whoever dared remonstrate against these robberies, he treated with the grossest contumely, and often with personal violence. Grosteste speaks out indignantly of ecclesiastics "putting the ordinary revenues of their sees into their pockets, while they exacted new and unusual procurations, and saying, whoever visited merely for the emoluments, would attend only to the receipt of the money and the enlistment, and would become farmers of sins, receiving from offenders a sum of money to leave them in their evil courses." This was just what occurred. The Bishop, as soon as Boniface approached Lincoln, went to the Pope at Lyons. The twentieth of the English rectories purchased a bull, settling the business of procurations, directed to Grosteste and two other bishops, and called the New Constitution.

Grosteste, as a "rebel to the archbishopric," had previously been under the Last BAN of Canterbury, pronounced with "bell, book, and candle," fifty or more priests being present; and again he is publicly interdicted at Canterbury, and elsewhere, for refusing to put his seal to a circular letter for forcibly raising money for a vast debt incurred under Boniface and his predecessor.

"I should render myself odious," exclaims the Bishop,

"especially as the King and Pope are both at this time making large demands."

He is now in his seventy-seventh year, and having his heart set on the accomplishment of its dearest wish, the establishing of a good *resident* ministry in his diocese, he obtains a bull empowering him to reform the religious orders. It is one of great importance, placing the revenues at his disposal so that he may found new vicarages and rectories. Of course this bull would not have been had, if the Pope's interest had not been well provided for by these new institutions—but the bishop's grand end is obtained—means for a faithful care of souls. The monks and nuns, however, appeal in a body to the Pope. And, perfectly as Innocent and all the world understands the case, Grosteste is cited to Lyons, for the third and last time. Though feeble and ill he must appear.

He is roughly received, and his hopes are crushed by an adverse decision.

"I relied upon your promises," said he, "but am entirely disappointed."

"What is that to you?" savagely retorted Innocent; "you have performed your part, and we are disposed to favour them. Is your eye evil because I am good?"

In a low tone, but so as to be heard, the venerable Prelate exclaimed, "O money! how great is thy power, especially at the court of Rome," one of the boldest speeches, under the circumstances, ever uttered.

Before he left Lyons, Grosteste gave copies of a long sermon, on the abominable vices of the papacy, to the Pope and the cardinals.

He returned safely to England notwithstanding, for his exalted character still gave him as it were a charmed life. The Pope *durst not* touch him.

Grosteste fell now into deep dejection. His great designs were shattered in the dust. Corruption was triumphant.

He saw nothing but ruin and desolation for the Church, and longed to lay down his burden; but, faithful to the last, he would not, lest the King impose some unworthy person in his place.

Rallying his energies, he made his last strict visitation, going into the cells and dormitories of the monasteries, and having every place that he found shut up, opened for his inspection.

He had a thorough inquiry made into the alien rents and emoluments, and found that Innocent the Fourth had impoverished the kingdom more than all his predecessors. These aliens had 70,000 marks, nearly thrice as much as the royal revenues, and the evil was still growing.

The King was now obtaining bulls for benevolences for himself. The Bishop had written to the Queen beseeching her influence to lead the King into better measures. He now attended an assembly of prelates in London, and found that, among other artifices, Henry pretended to be going on a crusade, and had got a bull for a tenth of the Church's revenues for three years. Nearly the whole was to be received *before* he went. The King's clerks read this bull very confidently, when Grosteste, rising in his place, with fiery indignation exclaimed:—

"What is this I hear? You are too hasty in your conclusions. Can you imagine we shall ever consent to such an accursed contribution? Thus bend the knee to Baal?" and he immediately proposed that a petition should be presented to the King, "to have regard to the salvation of his own soul, and desist from such rash attempts."

The King was furious when he heard what had passed. He stormed and drove everybody out of the room. At last he sent to *beg* a benevolence. Grosteste and the rest consented, on three conditions,—that the King conform to Magna Charta—do not use this as a precedent—and engage to apply the money to the professed purpose.

The King, more enraged than before, sent to ask if this was their only answer.

They prudently waited for the Archbishop, who was not present, and as the barons would do nothing without the prelates, and the prelates had no more to say, the King neither went to the Holy Land, nor had the tenths.

It is now the year 1253, Grosteste's last, and he takes a higher and still higher stand as time wanes with him. He repeatedly excommunicates all who infringe on Magna Charta.

In January, he received a bull of *provision*, commanding him to appoint Frederick Savonia, an Italian youth, to the first vacant canonry. Any other disposal is null and void. Refusal or obstruction will be followed by excommunication. All controveners are cited, without plea or excuse, before the Pope within two months, and a clause of *non obstante* sets aside every impediment.

The Bishop replied by a letter, which more than all else has rendered his memory immortal. Several copies of it exist in manuscript and print. "It retorts almost excommunication for excommunication." The style is sarcastic, and conveys much more than is expressed. The Bishop argues in it, says Isaac Milner, "entirely on Protestant principles." It is daring, lofty, powerful, and the effect of the whole on Innocent must have been withering. Imagine him reading such sentences as—"The *non obstante* clause overflows with uncertainty, fraud, and deceit, and strikes at the root of all confidence between man and man." · · · "Your *provisions* are to destruction." · · · "Flesh and blood, and not the heavenly Father hath revealed such doctrines." · · · "No sin can be more adverse to the doctrine of the apostles, more abominable to Jesus Christ, than to defraud and rob those souls which ought to be the objects of the pastoral care, of that instruction which, by the Scriptures, they have a right to." · · · "Such mandates ought not to

be obeyed, though an angel from heaven should command," &c.

Innocent, in a furious passion, with a stern countenance, exclaimed:—"Who is this old dotard, deaf and absurd, that thus rashly presumes to judge of my actions? By Peter and Paul, if I were not restrained by the goodness of my own heart, I would make such an example of him, as should astonish the world. Is not his King my vassal, my slave?"

Grosteste is publicly excommunicated by the Pope and his agents, but he is passing beyond the reach of human malice, his illness grows on him, and death is near. The patriot barons are gathering for war. Their chief, De Montfort, has long been intimate with Grosteste; in fact, they are kindred spirits, of whom their age is not worthy. The dying Bishop lays his hand on the head of De Montfort's son, Henry, and utters this prophecy:—"Oh, my dear son, you and your father will die on one day, but in the cause of truth and justice."

They fell together at the battle of Evesham, twelve years after, lamented as patriot martyrs by the nation.

It was now October 6th, when the nights began to grow long, and as the Bishop was tired with lying, and his disorder lay heavy upon him, he sent for some of his chaplains, and conversed with them at great length on the loss of souls through the avarice of Rome.

"The Church," he said, "can never be delivered from this Egyptian bondage, but by the edge of the sword."

The Pope he proved a heretic. "For what is heresy?" said he to John de St. Giles. "Define it." John hesitated. The Bishop did it for him; showing that all prelates were heretics, who, from an earthly and fleshly view, abused their trust of the care of souls.

He was very solemnly indignant against the friars for not opposing the Pope. And thus, full of intellectual

power, lamenting over the Church, and, as Mathew Paris says, very distinctly prophesying the Reformation, "the holy Bishop Robert departed this world, which he never loved."

When Innocent received the tidings, he exclaimed, "I rejoice! and let every true son of the Church rejoice with me, that my great enemy is removed." It seemed as though the Pope had quailed before the presence of this pious and upright prelate, and dreaded even his absent frown. He recovered courage at the news of his death, and wrote, with the petty malice of a vulgar mind, commanding the King to have his bones taken up, and cast ignominiously out of Lincoln Cathedral, where they were honourably interred; but before the letter went, Innocent himself departed whither the dying Bishop had cited him to appear - before the judgment-seat of the righteous God.

CHAPTER V.

CONCLUSION.

It is surprising, in some respects, that so little notice should have been taken by modern writers of a man so eminent for worth and learning, and who occupied so influential a station at this important period of our national history. He appears to have been endued with all the courageous intrepidity of Luther, and with much of the evangelical zeal of Wycliffe, who was in some important points not only his follower but his imitator. Nevertheless, Bishop Grosteste was in reality more of a political than a religious reformer. He protested against the tyranny of the popes, and even pronounced Pope Innocent the Fourth, the sovereign Pontiff of the Church, to be a heretic. He does not, however, appear to have entertained any clear views of the radical and unscriptural defects of the papal system, and it might well excite our

wonder if he had done so, when we consider that he died in the year 1253, two hundred and thirty years before Luther was born.

There is much of a highly significant character suggested by the energetic life of this noble Englishman of the thirteenth century. How often has our remote and insular position fenced off from us the dangers under which far prouder and once more powerful nations have sunk! England was indeed so degraded at that period under papal tyranny, and so slavishly made use of for the aggrandisement of the courtiers of the Vatican, that it came to be styled in Italy—"the Pope's Ass." Yet when we study the life of the good Bishop of Lincoln, we find that at that very period the legates and emissaries of the Pope were bearded in the largest diocese of the kingdom, and compelled to forego their iniquitous plunder in defiance of papal bulls and excommunications, and all the terrors of corrupt despotism.

The period during which the most important years ot Bishop Grosteste's life was passed, is one of deep interest to the free pe ple of England, who have succeeded to the inheritance of rights and liberty bequeathed to them from elder times. In the year 1216, the weak and tyrannical King John died, after having been forced to concede to his barons the charter of rights, which is still our national boast; while at the same time the imbecile monarch yielded to the tyranny of Rome, and humbled himself to the dust before the legate commissioned to receive this abject token of the success of spiritual despotism. The incident is pointedly referred to by Wordsworth, in his Ecclesiastical Sonnets:—

> As with the stream our voyage we pursue,
> The gross materials of this world present
> A marvellous study of wild accident;
> Uncouth proximities of old and new;
> And bold transfigurations, more untrue
> (As might be deemed) to disciplined intent

> Than aught the sky's fantastic element,
> When most fantastic, offers to the view.
> Saw we not Henry scourged at Becket's shrine?
> Lo! John self-stripped of his insignia:—crown,
> Sceptre and mantle, sword and ring, laid down
> At a proud Legate's feet! The spears that line
> Baronial halls, the opprobrious insult feel,
> And angry Ocean roars a vain appeal.

The weak and despised John was succeeded by his eldest son, Henry the Third, a child of ten years old at the time of his father's death, who proved equally imbecile, and scarcely less intractable than his father.

The influence of the clergy at the period is proved by the position occupied by the dignitaries of the Church during this reign. Peter de Roches, Bishop of Winchester, a foreign ecclesiastic, assumed a prominent part in the government on the death of the Earl of Pembroke, through whose influence Henry had been acknowledged heir to the throne. In 1232 he was placed at the head of affairs, on the fall of Hubert de Burgh; and on his degradation, Edmund, Archbishop of Canterbury, became chief minister. Each of these proved tyrannical and despotic when power was placed in their hands; it becomes therefore a point of high interest and importance when we find their influence counterbalanced by a man like Grosteste, who adorned the high office to which he had been advanced by learning and piety altogether singular in his own age, and rare in every period of Church history.

The weakness and vacillation of the monarch served to show more clearly to the barons the strength of their position. Henry repeatedly engaged in war with France, each time followed only by disasters and disgrace. This compelled him to have recourse to parliaments, who availed themselves of his needy position to force him to agree to their terms. In 1253, he only obtained a grant of money from them by consenting to a solemn

ratification of the great charters; a ceremony which was repeatedly performed in the course of the reign. His reign, indeed, is memorable in the history of the constitution, as that in which the first true representative parliament can be said to have assembled, consisting of representatives of counties, cities, and burghs, as well as of the spiritual and temporal peers.

The religious liberty of England is too intimately linked with its civil rights to render the important features of this interesting era unsuitable for our present subject. It is a matter of no trifling significance, that both regal and papal tyranny should thus early have received so resolute a check in England. The weakness of Henry the Third, and the many difficulties of his reign, enabled Grosteste courageously to exercise his high office in obedience to the dictates of conscience and the tenets of a purer faith than were then elsewhere known throughout Europe. The internal strife of the Papacy, and the weakness and opposition of rival pontiffs, strengthened the hands of Wycliffe at a later period. Both of them died peaceably in their beds, in spite of the malignant animosity of their opponents; looking forward with bright hope to better times for their own land, and with a clear faith for themselves, in the promises of the Gospel. They were alike honoured by what may be styled the effigy of martyrdom; the defeated malignity of their enemies wreaking their imbecile vengeance on their bones, and carrying the hatred beyond the grave.

Archbishop Cranmer, a far less intrepid and courageous man than either, succeeded under a more powerful monarch in effecting the overthrow of the system against which both had striven. But the vengeance of his defeated opponents struck home to him, and the anguish and the heroism of the martyr's death at Oxford, witnessed the consummation that was too tardily awarded to Grosteste and Wycliffe.

GUTENBERG AND FUST;

OR,

THE FIRST PRINTED BIBLE.



THE year 1453, is a memorable epoch in history. The middle of the century that witnessed the revival of knowledge and the triumph of classical learning in the south of Europe, was marked also by the final overthrow of the eastern empire, and the establishment of the followers of Mahomet, with a firm footing on the soil from whence the eastern rulers of the dismembered Roman empire were driven. This important event had long been foreshadowed by the luxury and decaying vigour of the eastern empire. The fall of Con-

stantinople, in 1453, accomplished its destiny, and the highways were forthwith crowded with fugitives seeking safety in the unconquered kingdoms of Christendom. On the sacking of Constantinople, the learned men of Greece were scattered through the capitals of Europe, bearing with them invaluable treasures in the ancient Greek manuscripts they had rescued from the spoiler. The greater number of these were conveyed to Italy, where a general excitement prevailed on behalf of classical learning, so that numerous scholars were ready to welcome the fugitives, and hail the literary treasures they brought with them, as the most valuable gifts that the western could derive from the eastern empire.

Cosmo de Medici, the celebrated Florentine, was specially active at this period, both in welcoming the learned strangers, and in acquiring, by every means in his power, the literary treasures which the inroads of barbarism had scattered, and threatened to destroy. Thousands of manuscripts were brought home by the agents of this indefatigable collector, many of them unknown before; and numerous transcribers were employed in slowly multiplying copies of Xenophon, Thucydides, Herodotus, Homer, Plato, Aristotle, and the more recent works of the Greek fathers; so that we in all probability owe to the princely merchant of Florence, the preservation of many of these invaluable treasures of antiquity.

While, however, the south of Europe was thus diligently engaged in preserving and multiplying, by the slow and costly process of the copiers, the treasures of ancient literature, a process was silently evolving in the north, destined to effect a mighty revolution on the church, and on the world. At the very time when the Moslem troops were mustering on the European shores, and the walls of Constantinople were falling before these fanatical besiegers, an unnoticed and obscure German mechanic was maturing an art which was destined to prove the most

important discovery in the history of the world, and to build up new empires on a more stable basis than had been dreamt of in the republics of Greece, or the despotic empires of the Romans and Goths.

At the village of Sulgeloch, near Mentz, or Mayence, as it is now called, John Gutenberg, the inventor of printing, was born, in the year 1397. Of his childhood and youth scarcely anything is known, for he closed his life in poverty, and died while others were reaping the profits of his great invention. He appears, from such glimpses as we obtain of his early years, to have been a man of great energy; and of that natural vehemence, and animal life, which only requires a sound bias, and the selection of some sufficient object of pursuit, to lead to high and valuable attainments. His youth was passed in the city of Mentz, pursuing some mechanical occupation, the exact nature of which is not known; but there can be little doubt, from the success of his labours at a later date, that his early employment was such as prepared him for his great work.

Meanwhile, however, the young apprentice of Mayence found other matters to keep his hands in employment, and to satisfy his restless and still unsatisfied energies. The period when he left his quiet native village of Sulgeloch, to seek for such education for head and hand as the neighbouring Rhenish capital could afford him, was during the early years of the fifteenth century, an era of great and universal activity. The burghers of the free cities were rising into importance; the old feudal bondage that had so long formed the sole tie between the nobles and the rural population, was rapidly becoming modified, or altogether displaced by the freer notions that had sprung up among the wealthy trading burghers of the large towns. Such a change was watched, as might be expected, with peculiar jealousy by those whose interests were thereby involved. The citizen was no less anxious to guard his

newly established rights against the encroachments of the older privileged classes, than were the nobles to check every interference with their time-hallowed superiority and lordships. Numerous contests, often of a fierce and sanguinary nature, resulted from the clashing of these rival interests; and one of the earliest glimpses which we obtain of young Gutenberg, is as an active partizan in these party feuds.

Fortune at no time rewarded very liberally the exertions of poor Gutenberg; it has been reserved indeed for posterity to yield to him the tardy acknowledgment due to his genius and indomitable perseverance, well nigh four centuries after he had been laid in his unhonoured and long-forgotten grave. Fortune seems to have been as little inclined to reward his early political struggles as the more noble and invaluable life-labours on which he was soon after to enter. "During his residence in Mentz," says one of his biographers, "he became implicated in an insurrection of the citizens against the nobility, and was compelled to fly to Strasbourg to avoid the vengeance of his victorious adversaries." No more minute account has been preserved of this civic contest, which probably differed little from similar disturbances that were of frequent occurrence at that period in most of the capitals and large commercial towns of Europe, and excited apparently as little notice then, as an ordinary street riot would now lead to. There is something, however, that cannot but strike the thoughtful reader, as very characteristic of the future inventor of the art of printing, in this early and passing glimpse of his first appearance in public life. Nobles and Kings were yet to learn the power of that mighty engine that was to form the great life-work of Gutenberg; Pontiffs were to tremble before its indomitable assaults; and slavery, feudalism, and unjust class-privileges of every kind, were to fall before the triumphant progress of the printing-press. We say,

therefore, that it was characteristic—we would even say, it was typical, of the future inventor of printing, that his first appearance should have been as an abettor of the popular cause, in opposition to the despotic power of the nobles.

The old town of Mentz, the capital of the province of Rheinhessen, is one of the most ancient and remarkable cities of Europe. Its first erection dates before the Christian era. More recently it occupies an important and very interesting position among the Catholic bishoprics of Christendom; its historians tracing back the introduction of Christianity and the chief pastoral office there, to Crescens, who was a disciple of Paul, and suffered martyrdom there in the year 103. It is still a strange, old-fashioned, and irregular-built town, sloping downwards to the banks of the Rhine, a little below the junction of the Maine with that majestic river. The streets are narrow and gloomy; abounding with the picturesque edifices of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, that carry the mind back to the time when these pent-up thoroughfares formed the narrow arena for civil broils; and the hardy German apprentice, John Gutenberg, with others as bold and reckless, though now all forgotten, were leagued, with clubs and bills, against the armed retainers of the fierce German barons, and contended every pass and alley of the ancient city with their old feudal masters. Gutenberg had to learn elsewhere those arts on which his great discovery was to be founded. He hastily abandoned the town of Mentz, on finding that his zeal in the popular cause had marked him out as a special object of vengeance to the exasperated nobles, and fled, as we have seen, to the city of Strasbourg. We shall now follow him thither, and learn what may still be gleaned of his proceedings there, after the lapse of so long a period as has now intervened between the great discovery of the art of printing, and this nineteenth century, in which its mighty powers are being for the first time fully developed.

CHAPTER II.

STRASBOURG.

The city of Strasbourg, whither Gutenberg retired from the fury of his adversaries at Mentz, has long since been incorporated with the dependencies of the French crown. Its early history, however, discloses many interesting and remarkable incidents worthy of the honour of that great invention which it has disputed for centuries with the city of Mentz, with others strongly characteristic of the ages that preceded the illumination of the printing-press. It early obtained the privileges of a free city, and exhibited the consequent symptoms of industry and increasing prosperity. In the year 1349, a darker scene marks a memorable epoch of its history. It was visited by a fearful mortality, by which multitudes of its inhabitants were swept away; and the rest fled in terror, abandoning a city that seemed given up to the dominion of swift disease and death. The reign of a blind superstition, however, was no less powerful and influential. The terror-stricken inhabitants returned to their city when the plague abated, and fixing on the persecuted Jews as the originators of that deadly pestilence, two hundred of them were committed to the flames.

The principles of the Reformation early gained a footing in this ancient city of the German empire. They were checked for a time by the Emperor, Charles the Fifth; but notwithstanding this opposition, the Protestants gained such influence, that they obtained possession of several of the churches. Since then it has long ceased to form a part of the Germanic union. In 1681, it surrendered to Louis the Fourteenth, who was already master of the surrounding country. By him the circuit of the walls

was enlarged, the fortifications were strengthened with numerous towers and bastions, and the whole defences reconstructed with such labour and skill as to render it one of the strongest fortresses in Europe. It was by these means permanently incorporated with the dominions of the French crown, under whose rule it has ever since remained.

The more ancient houses of this celebrated city are all constructed in the German style, with lofty and picturesque gables, and steep sloping roofs, pierced with successive tiers of storm windows. But these are gradually disappearing before the rapid changes of modern taste, and are being replaced by houses of a much plainer and less attractive style of construction.

Dr. Dibdin, who visited this ancient town in July, 1818, thus describes the appearance it then presented:—

"The city of Strasbourg encloses within its walls a population of about fifty thousand. I suspect, however, that in former times its population was more numerous. At the present moment there are about two hundred and fifty streets, great and small, including squares and alleys. The main streets, upon the whole, are neither wide nor narrow; but to a stranger they have a very singular appearance, from the windows of almost every house being covered on the outside with iron bars, arranged after divers fashions. This gives them a very prison-like effect, and is far from being ornamental, as it is sometimes intended to be. The glazing of the windows is also frequently very curious. In general the panes of glass are small and circular, being confined in leaden casements. The number of houses in Strasbourg is estimated at three thousand five hundred. There are not fewer than forty-seven bridges in the interior of the town . . . . . . The houses are generally lofty, and the roofs contain two or three tiers of open windows, garret-fashioned, which gives them a picturesque appearance; but which, I learn, were constructed

as granaries, to hold flour for the support of the inhabitants when the city should sustain a long and rigorous siege."

Such then is the ancient city of Strasbourg, whither the apprentice of Mayence fled to escape the vengeance of his powerful political adversaries. The most we learn of his proceedings while there, is, that necessity compelled him to employ himself in mechanical occupations, in pursuing which he discovered the great art which has rendered his name immortal. There were in use at that period various ingenious mechanical arts, extensively employed chiefly in promoting the amusemnements of the people, and which naturally suggest themselves as the most probable source of that happy thought on which the ingenious invention was founded.

Previous to the discovery of printing, and the general diffusion of literature among the people, one of the most popular sources of amusement among all ranks and classes of the community, was playing cards. These were no doubt originally multiplied like the books of the same period, by ingenious artists, who drew them one by one, and consequently they must have been costly, and very limited in their diffusion. This, however, was one of the amusements of the period, which it was impossible to confine to the privileged classes. Nearly all ranks of society had then more leisure than now, and a gradually increasing demand for sets of these cards led to inventions, by means of which they could be rapidly multiplied at a cheap rate. The earliest process appears to have been that still known among us by the name of stencilling, by means of which many of the commoner kinds of house-papers for decorating the walls of our apartments are still produced. This consists simply of a stiff card, or thin sheet of metal, which is pierced with the device intended to be represented on the paper, and this being laid on the top of it, it is rubbed all over with a brush dipped in colour,

which reaching only those parts of the paper underneath, left exposed by the apertures cut out in the plate, thereby forms, by a mere dash of the brush, the required figure. When different colours are intended to be introduced, the pattern of each colour is cut on a separate plate, and each being then smeared over with its own colour, the requisite chromatic pattern is produced.

This process, however, is both rude and unsatisfactory, though it no doubt sufficed to supply the demand for a time; and by lessening their cost, and greatly increasing their diffusion, no doubt greatly extended the taste for this exciting amusement.

Such was the high importance the manufacture of playing cards had assumed in England, in the reign of Edward the Fourth, that statutes were enacted to protect the native manufacturers, against the introduction of cards from the continent. The first improvement superadded to the daubing of the stencillers, may be said to have formed the discovery of wood-engraving. The outline of the figure being drawn on the surface of a smooth and hard piece of wood—generally that of the pear tree—the remainder of the surface was cut away, leaving this in relief. The figure thus produced was used simply as a stamp; but, from the firmness of its outline, even in its rudest form, it would greatly add to the less distinct work of the stencillers, uniting their straggling colours into a consistent whole.

The art of *figure-cutting*, as it was styled, being thus invented, made rapid progress. No doubt, the cards in use among the nobles and wealthiest classes, were still chiefly the work of ingenious artists, who multiplied them by the laborious process of hand-drawing, and colouring. The high prices obtained for these, and their constant demand, would form a strong inducement for the perfecting of any process that promised to produce more easily such cards as might command the favour of the nobles;

and, we accordingly find, by the middle of the fifteenth century, that cutting on wood had been brought to great perfection, and was applied to various purposes, gradually approximating to the art we have now chiefly in view. Several of the specimens of wood-engraving, executed in the year 1466—a year of special note in the progress of this art—are still preserved in the collections of the curious, and form examples of tasteful execution, such as would not disgrace many good engravers of our own day A very curious and unique print, however, forms one of the rare treasures of the Earl Spencer's collection, bearing a date twenty-three years earlier than this, and even that is by no means conceived to have been the first production of the wood-engraver.

The next step in what may be justly styled the preparatory labours of the precursors of Gutenberg, was the printing of these engraved blocks. This appears to have been originally effected by laying the paper on the top of it, after it had been inked on the surface, and then rubbing it behind. This process, though very tedious, is so highly satisfactory in its results, that it is still invariably resorted to by wood engravers, for the purpose of taking their own proofs. It wants, however, the grand desideratum of rapidity, and, consequent cheapness of execution, without which no extensive multiplication of such works could be effected. Much, however, was done, even with this tedious process. Pictures of saints, and the representations of the pious legends of the church, were executed in a series of blocks, which were bound up into a book; and thus another great step in the developement of the art was effected. Mr. Jackson has given a very interesting and curious account of these, illustrated with fac-similes of some of the blocks, in his ingenious and elaborate history of wood-engraving. One of these is generally known under the name of the *Biblia Pauperum*, or Bible for the Poor, which Mr. Jackson, however, very justly considers

a misnomer, as there can be little doubt that the cost of it, when issued, must have been such as to limit it exclusively to the use of the wealthy. To each of the blocks of this rare folio, a passage of scripture or some other illustrative sentence is appended; the whole being, of course, cut out of the solid block. The acceptableness of these verbal illustrations had, no doubt, become speedily apparent to the wood-cutters, as, in later books of the same kind, the explanatory texts are found much more ample; and, latterly, even small hand-books, containing the rudiments of grammar, for the use of the schools, were cut in blocks, and wrought off in the same manner.

How nearly are we thus arrived, in the history of the arts at this period, to the complete development of that secret on which the wondrous art of printing depended; that mysterious invention, which appeared to the contemporaries of Gutenberg and Fust as explicable alone on the theory of magic and the agency of the devil. Nothing more seems wanting, than that some ready mechanic should proceed, with saw in hand, to separate the texts of these block-books, as they are termed, letter from letter, so that they might be distributed, for the compositor to set up anew at his pleasure, and produce therefrom any sentence desired,—so simple does this, the greatest invention of modern ages, appear to us, looking back upon it; as, indeed, all great discoveries do, when once the master-mind has revealed the secret to the world.

Meanwhile, we must inquire, if it may be learned, what has been occupying the time and labour of Gutenberg, at Strasbourg? What has been occupying his thoughts we may guess with considerable confidence; for it cannot be questioned that his attention has been arrested by the labours of the block-cutters, and his thoughts turned to the possibility of simplifying their labours. We can only guess at the occupation of the mechanic of Strasbourg. We might, with some probability, affirm that his occupation

was the cutting of these very blocks; that he was a wood-engraver, in fact, and one of the earliest of its practisers. It has, indeed, been affirmed, very commonly, in the history of printing, that his first types were cut in metal; but this is distinctly contradicted in the earliest account of the subsequent invention of Schöeffer, by which the art was perfected. This was the multiplying the types, by casting them in metal, from a single matrix. This account is stated to have been written by a relative of Fust; and it is there remarked:—"But there were as many difficulties at first with these letters, *as there had been before with wooden ones;* the metal being too soft to support the force of the impression; but this defect was soon remedied, by mixing the metal with a substance which sufficiently hardened it."

Since, then, the first letters of Gutenberg were cut in wood, it may be very reasonably concluded that he had early turned his attention to that art, and, while supporting himself by his labours at Strasbourg, was already pondering the scheme, and even preparing his moveable letters, for the first efforts of the compositor, whose handiwork was to revolutionize the world.

CHAPTER III.

THE DISCOVERY.

WHATEVER may have been the exact nature of Gutenberg's occupation at Strasbourg, he would appear to have prospered in his employment. He is described by one of the historians of this period as being a merchant of Strasbourg in the year 1424, an honourable position at that time in a free city of the empire. He was no doubt a man of indomitable energy and perseverance, and one,

therefore, in whose hands commerce was likely to prove successful if he devoted his energies to it. A higher work, however, was occupying his thoughts, and cheating him of the rewards of successful industry, in order that future ages might be blessed by the grand discovery achieved by his perseverance and zeal.

About ten years after the date referred to above, we have positive evidence that the great invention of Gutenberg, although preserved as a profound secret, was occupying his thoughts. There is almost conclusive evidence that he first employed himself in the production of block books; there is also reason to think, that the first step made beyond this, was the separate cutting of words most in use, which, coupled with abbreviations, double letters, endings of words, and the like supposed facilities to the compositor, long after formed a peculiar feature of the fonts in use.

A year or two later, probably in 1437, we find Gutenberg still at Strasbourg, and now actively labouring to bring his invention into use. Its gradual development had no doubt satisfied him of the necessity of some cooperative aid to enable him to bring his discovery to the test of practical experiment, and we accordingly find him engaged this year, along with Andrew Dritzchen and two other wealthy citizens of Strasbourg,—all bound to secrecy,—in making a series of experiments preparatory to his great attempt.

One can fancy the enthusiastic inventor, after long meditation, venturing on a cautious disclosure of the wonderful art to these prudent German burghers. Slowly, and by dint of many calculations, and many demonstrations of the ready sale of manuscripts, and the large prices paid for block books, he at length gets them convinced of the value of his new art, of the feasibility of its practical application; and it is determined to give it a fair trial. Gutenberg has now been labouring at it for upwards of

ten years. He has so far matured it after many trials and disappointments. With all the enthusiasm, therefore, of true genius, we cannot doubt that his zeal was tempered, by hard-won experience, into patient persevering hope.

Not so, however, with Andrew Dritzehen and his other partners in the secret. Now that he has satisfied them of the feasibility of his scheme, they are all eagerness to begin. They long to lay hold on the promised wealth, and to realize the golden dreams he has conjured up before them. Money is at once freely embarked in the project, as in a grand speculation that promises to reproduce an hundredfold for all their outlay. Perhaps the inventor was roused anew to his earliest and brightest dreams, and joining in the sanguine anticipations of his partners in the great work, believed he was on the eve of accomplishing his grand project and receiving full reward. Perhaps—and it is more probable—he only smiled at their too sanguine anticipations, and warned them that time, and labour, and patience, as of the hopeful husbandman, must all be largely bestowed, ere they could be called upon to enter in and reap the abundant harvest.

Even then, perhaps, he looked beyond the fleeting re wards of wealth, and pictured to himself the coming generations "on whom knowledge will descend like the first and second rain, uninterrupted, unabated, unbounded, fertilizing some grounds and overflowing others; changing the whole form of social life; establishing and overthrowing religions; erecting and destroying kingdoms!" Even so has our own great novelist represented the philosophic astrologers of Louis the Eleventh of France reasoning on the fruits of this great invention. To such should all great discoverers look for their reward; to the fruit of our labours should we all, indeed, look, whatever they may be, and to the influence they are destined to have on others. But man is short-sighted, and the distant future is dim before

him. Daily bread must be had, and he lives in the present even when most he seeks to return upon the attractive glories of the past, or to press into that towards which his work is reaching beyond.

Gutenberg was a man like ourselves. Dimly he guessed at a great future, but clearly he realized the present necessities of daily life, and a present reward was no unworthy or unappreciated stimulus. It is the very source of motives that have often checked despondency and given fresh vigour to relaxing zeal, and even by such means must printing-presses and steam-engines, and railways and electric telegraphs, with all other wonderful creations of genius, be evolved from the inert matter around us, and summoned into being for all future times.

We learn little that is very definite of the labours of Gutenberg with his Strasbourg colleagues. The world chronicles no history of abortive attempts. It rewards no labourer who is unvictorious, how hard soever be his toil. These years, indeed, of patient persevering hope, were but the schooling of the discoverer. Yet while cities deem it an honour worthy of contention, as to which was the birth-place of the discoverer—though no born citizen after all, but the native of a village still obscure—to Strasbourg undoubtedly belongs the honour of having been the birth-place of PRINTING.

It is not to be overlooked, however, in investigating the claims of the earliest discoverers of this wonderful art, that ages before the ingenious mechanic of Strasbourg had turned his thoughts to the perfecting of a system by which he could multiply at his will the manuscripts of the monkish transcribers, a strange people on the remote confines of the Asiatic continent had the same art in familiar use. The Chinese nation seem constantly to step in before the discoverers of modern Europe, establishing a priority of right to their most valuable inventions; and yet in this, as in all their other discoveries, they have only

carried it a few stages onward and then paused, contented with the fruits of their labours, while its Gothic discoverers, dissatisfied with a success so imperfect, have rapidly carried out their first thoughts to more efficient and valuable results.

In a communication laid before the Paris Academy of Sciences, by M. Stanislas Julien, only a few months since, on the origin of printing in China, it was stated that the art of printing existed in China, so far at least as engraving on wood is concerned, at least as early as the year 593 of the Christian era. In proof of this the writer quotes a passage taken from the Chinese Encyclopædia, Ke-Tchi-King-Youen, which states that on the 8th day of the 12th month of the 13th year of the reign of Wen-Ti, it was decreed that a collection should be made of all the drawings in use, and unpublished writings, in order that they might be engraved on wood, and printed. This. says the Chinese writer in the Encyclopædia, was the commencement of printing from wood blocks, 339 years before the time of Fong-In-Wung, to whom the invention has been erroneously attributed. M. Julien speaks next of printing from engravings on stone, among the Chinese, the engraving in this case being cut into the stone. This, he says, dates from the second century; but it was not till the ninth century that stone was engraved in such a way as to take a white impression on a black ground. Printing in characters made of baked earth, also existed in China some centuries before the art of printing was known in Europe; while the great available feature of the art, the discovery of which forms with European historians the true era of its discovery, namely, that of com posing and printing from moveable types, was first introduced into China between the years 1041 and 1048, by a blacksmith Pi-Ching. So that it would seem, our information concerning the remoter inventions of the Chinese in reference to this art, are more precise and

incontrovertible than our knowledge of the labours of our own Gutenberg, Fust, and Schöeffer, with the rival claimants of Holland and Italy.

From this it is obvious that the block books of the fifteenth century, already described, were in reality precisely the same species of works as had been produced in China for centuries. The mode of producing impressions, too, was the same; for in this respect the Chinese still adhere to their first plan, printing on thin paper only on one side, by means of friction, and doubling each leaf backward so as to produce the same practical effect as results from our turning the sheet, and throwing off the continuous copy on the reverse of the paper.

Another feature in which the Chinese system of printing still resembles the first elementary devices of its European discoverers, is occasioned by the peculiarities of its written language. It may be said to be without an alphabet; at least the elementary characters have not been reduced to the same limited and convenient number as in most other languages, by making them the simple representatives of the elementary sounds of the human voice, instead of the hieroglyphics and symbols of ideas and objects. The Chinese typography became therefore, of necessity, a system of composing with words, and not with letters, when the idea of moveable types was suggested; and thus it still remains in the state through which it may be said to have passed with its European discoverers almost without pausing.

As the Chinese mode of printing, however, was certainly the first mode practised in Europe, some have endeavoured altogether to deprive its European originators of the title of inventors; affirming that they only matured the knowledge of the art which was brought from China. There can be no question that the celebrated traveller, Marco Polo, who returned from China towards the close of the thirteenth century, had seen and described several

of the processes in use there for purposes nearly allied to that of the printing of books, and particularly that of stamping paper bills of exchange, with the Chinese written characters, by means of an engraved block, inked with vermilion. There is not, however, the slightest grounds for believing that this hint was of any avail to the ingenious mechanics of Mentz and Strasbourg. Fully a century elapsed, while the great work remained unattempted, and when it was begun in earnest, it was, as we have seen, by an entirely different route that its discoverers reached their goal. It even appears fortunate that the hint was overlooked, as the process suggested by the Chinese device, described by Marco Polo, could only have led to very partial success, which, once attained, its imitators might have been content to rest satisfied with, and so the great Art,—greatest in its consequences of all human discoveries, except that of written language,—might have remained the feeble and unproductive first thought which it has done in China—an abortive giant, stunted at its birth.

To Strasbourg then we must return for the sole work of discovery. There was the birth-place of the European printing-press. Its creator was John Gutenberg; his coadjutors, Andrew Dritzehen and the two nameless German burghers; and their sole reward the bright hopes which cheered them in the progress of their mighty task, as they gazed onward into a dimly seen yet bright futurity, and caught glimpses of the peaceful yet glorious triumphs which tended on its advancing strides. Honour be to the brave burghers of Mentz and Strasbourg. Pontiffs, and councils, and kings, were then debating mighty projects. Europe was a stage whereon grand political schemes were being wrought out by force of arms or by hardier guile. Her nobles, girt in steel and armed to the teeth, were jealously guarding their hereditary privileges against every innovation; and, lo! in the quiet workshop of a

humble mechanic, with neither noble patron nor noble opponent, the world's artillery was being wrought for the great battle of liberty and truth. The war-engines were being fashioned, the weapons were already forging, by which were to be successfully asserted, over all these privileged classes, the claims which are founded on eternal justice, and form the basis of the rights of man.

CHAPTER IV.

THE STRUGGLE.

THE discovery then is really made: yet much remains to be done before the world shall know its practical value—before, indeed, the world shall hear of it at all. Gutenberg kept no diary that we know of—no record of the many daily obstacles that beset him in his arduous struggle, though some of them may be guessed at. All we know certainly is, that in the year 1439, while Gutenberg was still at Strasbourg, and many experiments had been made with his moveable types, his coadjutor, Andrew Dritzehen, was dead; the money embarked by him and his partners was all expended; the careful and hard-won savings of Gutenberg himself were exhausted; and not one fragment survives, nor any evidence to lead us to think that anything had yet been practically effected by means of the new art, to supersede the labours of the copiers.

There was still a struggle for a time among the surviving members of this once hopeful copartnery; but all their sanguine dreams of fortune were now at an end. Gutenberg, indeed, still had as complete faith as ever in his ultimate success. Of the possibility of perfecting his discovery he never entertained a doubt. Nothing was

wanted but money and time. Time enough he had, if he could meanwhile secure the means of subsistence; but money was no longer procurable. His own hard-won savings were all exhausted. ' His partners, so far from being now likely to grant him further pecuniary aid, were clamorous for some return of the money they had expended in the pursuit of this fruitless phantom.

From that time till the year 1445, we learn little further of the proceedings of Gutenberg, than that he still continued to reside at Strasbourg, and appears to have been striving against many difficulties to carry forward the great life-work to which he had devoted himself. During these six years, however, little progress was made. Difficulties of a practical nature were probably observed and overcome, and his font of moveable types increased from time, as he found leisure to ply the slow and laborious task. But hope, meanwhile, was his sole comforter and reward; he wrought on in secret, and without the cheering sympathy of confederate or friend, for by the end of the year 1446, we find him at length abandoning all hope of success in the city of his adoption, and determining once more to return to Mentz.

How great were the changes that had been wrought during the long interval between his hasty flight from Mentz, and that in which he now resolved to return! Well nigh thirty years, memorable in the history of Europe, had intervened. Huss and Jerome of Prague had perished under the edicts of the council that deposed Pope John the Twenty-third. A religious war had raged for years, until the Bohemians protested against the encroachments of Rome, wrung from its intolerant defenders the right of religious worship in their native tongue, and of free communion in the Sacrament of the Supper, according to the example of its Founder; both the cup and the bread being received by all. Learning meanwhile had spread. The dogmas of the schoolmen were no longer

supreme and undisputed. The treasures of ancient learning had been gathered, and lay ready for the preserving care of the new art. The minds of all men were thirsting for knowledge. The time for the full birth of the printing-press had come—the time when it was to step forth, no longer with the feeble essays of block books, with their small folio pages filled with the rude yet ingenious pictures of saintly or scripture legends, and their detached and scattered texts, but in perfection, like Minerva full armed from the head of Jove, –supplying the place of the most valued manuscripts by still more perfect and legible duplicates of the treasures of the past.

Well nigh thirty years had passed, and Gutenberg has no longer to fear that the grave, the thoughtful, and ingenious mechanic and merchant of Strasbourg, will have aught to answer for the doings of the bold apprentice of Mentz. The knights and nobles of Germany have had other things to do in the interval than to treasure up their wrath against such humble offenders. The strife with burghers, apprentices, and peasants, has become a serious thing. Great principles have got to be involved in these once-slighted contests. The ancient and long-recognised privileges of the nobles, as of the hierarchy, are no longer acknowledged as of divine right by the people. It is a period pregnant with changes. Old things are passing away; in a very striking sense all things are becoming new; and he, the poor mechanic and trafficker of Strasbourg, is trudging—it may be on foot—certainly in humble guise, and unheeded alike by prince and peasant, on his way back to the scene of his first strife with these privileged classes.

The strife is to be renewed, but in very different fashion. The engine that is to prove the most effectual weapon against Rome is about to be erected under Papal encouragement; that power which is most surely to overturn all fictitious claims to special rights and privileges, founded

only on hereditary wrong done to their inferiors, is to be fostered at its birth by nobles and churchmen. It is a guileless guile, if we may so express it. It is sapping the foundations of its temporary props, like the young oak spreading on all hands its lusty roots beneath the soil, and slowly but surely displacing every obstacle to its mature strength, even though these may have served to shelter the tender sappling. The planters of this young oak knew not, or only dimly guessed, at the power and magnificence it was yet to attain, or the fruit that should drop from its far-spreading branches.

In the year 1445–6, Gutenberg returned to Mentz, bent on no longer delaying the prosecution of his discovery. The secret communicated to Andrew Dritzehen, at Strasbourg, had died with him; such knowledge of it as his nameless colleagues had obtained, was probably no longer regarded by them as worthy of a thought. In Gutenberg's breast alone it lived as a secret, pregnant with high results, as a lamp trimmed and ready for the torch to be applied, that it might enlighten and illume. That torch, however, is the same wealth which has been already partially tried at Strasbourg. Others must be introduced to the same secret, and new wealth be expended on the work ere either the inventor or the world shall reap the reward of all their anxious years of sacrifice and toil. Alas, the world has little regard for its original inventors, little generosity to spare for their reward. Other men were to enter into his labours; and injustice, and many slights, and fresh exile, were to be the return to Gutenberg for the labours of a lifetime. The world, however, was to be the gainer; let us hope that at least its brave benefactor had courage left to look into the future, and, as he saw the far-stretching influences of his discovery, and dimly traced its mighty workings on the destiny of man, rejoiced in the blessings that were to be born of it, and exclaimed—*This work is mine!*

CHAPTER V

THE FIRST PRINTED BIBLE.

JOHN FUST, an opulent citizen of Mentz, and a goldsmith by trade, was the person to whom Gutenberg applied, soon after his return to the city of his early adoption. Assistance must be had if he was ever to bring into practical use the discovery he had been so long maturing. He showed his judgment in the choice of a confederate. Fust proved a man of energy, perseverance, and zeal, sufficient to carry out the important task confided to him; if in other respects he failed, there may have been causes which might account for this, of which we are now ignorant. To him, therefore, Gutenberg disclosed his secret, and the progress he had already made; and, having opened his mind fully to him, he readily engaged to co-operate, by furnishing the needful advances.

John Fust does not appear to have had any greater share in the discovery of printing than that of advancing the necessary funds to carry it out, and readily entering into the project of the inventor. To his vigorous energy and perseverance, indeed, much is due. Yet his name has long occupied an unjust pre-eminence over that of the real inventor. As the utmost secrecy was long maintained by the first inventors of this art, so as to preserve its rewards to themselves, it was generally regarded with a mysterious curiosity, which was greatly aided by the superstitious credulity and ignorance of the period. It was part of the policy of its earliest practisers, to encourage the idea that their printed works were produced singly by the hand, like the missals and other manuscripts of the copiers. The works that first issued from the press were too costly and rare to be often so found as to admit of the compari-

son of different copies, yet such was sure to happen, sooner or later, and then the astonishing fact of each exactly resembling the other in every point, and dash, and turn, could not but excite astonishment. As their work went on, and copies were multiplied, the wonder only increased the more, and the conviction became a matter of popular belief, that Gutenberg and his associates were in league with the powers of darkness.

The peculiar prominence which the name of Fust has all along received in connection with the early history of this mysterious art, may, we think, be to a considerable extent accounted for, from his being confounded with the no less celebrated Dr. Faustus, whose learning and scientific knowledge, and perhaps also his pretensions to magic, which was so common among the students of science at that period, early rendered him a special object of mysterious regard among the Germans. The interest which attaches to these mysterious legends, has been materially enhanced of late years, by the fine poetic fancy and dramatic power that have been infused into this popular myth by successive writers of genius, and more especially by the wonderful work of Goethe, which has been again and again translated into English.

The same popular belief was entertained at an early period in regard to the German scholar and the goldsmith and printer of Mentz. Both were believed to be in league with the devil, and to have his agency at their command whenever they desired to accomplish any superhuman task. In this way it was believed that the early manuscripts were multiplied, and that Fust or Gutenberg had nothing more to do than to summon some of the attendant imps of darkness to obey their behest, and so have any number of copies of a manuscript that they pleased. A curious relic of this early superstition is still preserved in the popular name of *printer's devils*, by which the errand boys of the press are designated.

The end, however, to which the agency they employed was immediately to be directed, was sufficient to have satisfied the most ignorant of their superstitious traducers that the powers of darkness had no hand in the novel work. It was a discovery, indeed, pregnant with more certainty of overthrow and destruction to the emissaries of evil, whether earthly or spiritual, than any disclosures that had been made to man for fourteen centuries before. The proclamation of the accomplishment of the Gospel plan, by the Apostles of Christ, alone surpassed it in value, and its first work was the proclaiming anew of the same glad tidings to mankind.

Gutenberg and Fust got their copartners agreed upon at last. Their fonts were completed, their presses were ready, and all things prepared for the practical demonstration of what they were capable of accomplishing. "At last, therefore," says the historian of the English Bible, "between the years 1450 and 1455, for it has no date, their first great work was finished. This was no other than the Bible itself!—*the Latin Bible.* Altogether unknown to the rest of the world, this was what had been doing at Mentz, in the *West*, when Constantinople, in the *East*, was storming, and the Italian 'brief men,' or copyists, were so very busy with their pens. This Latin Bible, of 641 leaves, formed the *first* important specimen of printing with metal types. The very first homage was to be paid to that SACRED VOLUME, which had been sacrilegiously buried, nay, interdicted so long; as if it had been, with pointing finger, to mark at once the greatest honour *ever* to be bestowed on the art, and infinitely the highest purpose to which it was *ever* to be applied. Nor was this all. Had it been a single page, or even an entire sheet which was then produced, there might have been less occasion to have noticed it; but there was something in the whole character of the affair which, if not unprecedented. rendered it singular in the usual current of human

events. This Bible formed two volumes in folio, which have been 'justly praised for the strength and beauty of the paper, the exactness of the register, the lustre of the ink.' It was a work of 1282 pages, finely executed—a most laborious process, involving not only a considerable period of time, but no small amount of mental, manual, and mechanical labour; and yet, now that it had been finished, and now offered for sale, not a single human being, save the artists themselves, knew *how* it had been accomplished! The profound secret remained with themselves, while the entire process was probably still confined to the bosom of only two or three!

Of this splendid work, in two volumes, at least eighteen copies are known to exist, four on vellum, and fourteen on paper. Of the former, two are in this country, one of which is in the Grenville collection; the other two are in the Royal Libraries of Paris and Berlin. Of the fourteen paper copies there are ten in Britain: three in public libraries at Oxford, London, and Edinburgh, and seven in the private collections of different noblemen and gentlemen. The vellum copy has been sold as low as £260, though in 1827, as high as £504 sterling. Even the *paper* Sussex copy lately brought £190. Thus, as if it had been to mark the noblest purpose to which the art would ever be applied, *the* FIRST *Book printed with moveable metal types*, and so beautifully, was the BIBLE."

The consummation of all Gutenberg's labours and long-cherished hopes, cannot but be regarded with interest. It was a work, indeed, to be proud of; and, when he at last saw a copy of his own Bible finished, lying before him, with its handsome margin, its ornamented initials, and its beautiful regularity of type; and further considered that the same had been multiplied, so as now to be within the reach of hundreds, we cannot doubt but the brave man felt a reward in the honest exultation of that moment, that repaid him for his lifetime of toil. Would that it

had been, indeed, the close of his toils, and of his arduous struggle; but the rewards of genius are rarely tendered by the tardy gratitude of the world to its benefactors, until they are beyond reach alike of its selfish indifference or its clamorous applause.

CHAPTER VI.

FUST AND SCHOEFFER.

THE preceding chapter relates the final success of Gutenberg. In describing his triumph, however, it has not told of his reward. Like nearly all original inventors, he made nothing by his great discovery, which had cost him the labour and earnings of a lifetime. The proceedings that followed the issue of the Mentz Bible do not exhibit the character of John Fust in a very favourable light. The motives which had induced him to co-operate with the discoverer were purely of a commercial and selfish nature, and in his avidity to secure the profits of his expenditure, he appears to have acted a very ungenerous part. The expenses incurred had necessarily been great, and the wealthy goldsmith had adopted the most sagacious means to secure himself the full moiety of such profits as should accrue from their joint labour. The invention of poor Gutenberg, with all the toil and expenditure it had involved him in during so many years, would appear to have been reckoned as nothing by his greedy partner in the Mentz press. The outlay had proved unexpectedly heavy, and the remuneration was long deferred. Meanwhile the half of all money advanced was charged as a debt against the inventor, and no sooner was the work completed than Fust demanded its payment. Gutenberg was placed entirely in his power, as a poor man un-

happily almost always is in that of a wealthy rival. Fust instituted a suit against him in the courts of Mentz for the recovery of his debt, and pursued his advantage with such zeal that he soon obtained a decree against him; and on the 6th of November 1445, the whole printing apparatus fell into Fust's hands, including the valuable font of types at which Gutenberg had probably laboured well nigh twenty years.

Unfavourable as is the view we are thus compelled to take of the first patron of the printing-press, it undoubtedly owed much to his vigorous and well-directed efforts for its improvement. He pursued his advantage with untiring zeal, and with that shrewd and calculating policy which ever gives the experienced man of the world the advantage over the enthusiastic originator of any useful discovery. Soon after having possessed himself of all the knowledge that Gutenberg had to communicate, he adopted into his confidence and partnership a young man of genius, who completed the work which Gutenberg had advanced so far. This was Peter Schoeffer, the third in the illustrious trio of German fellow-labourers in the origination of the printing-press. He was a native of Gernsheim, in the county of Darmstadt. In early life he had followed the trade of a copyist at Paris, but having removed to Mentz soon after Gutenberg and Fust commenced operations, he was engaged by them as an assistant at their labours. Some interesting accounts have been handed down, derived from his relations, of the difficulties encountered during the progress of the Mentz Bible. Before they had completed the third quaternion, or gathering of four sheets, as he remarks, 4000 florins had been expended; an outlay enough to have damped the courage of the wealthiest and most sanguine speculator, and affording undoubtedly some apology for the harsh and selfish measure adopted by Fust on its completion. The great source of delay and expense arose from the neces-

sity of each individual type being separately cut. To the removal of this great obstacle Schoeffer now turned his attention, and by the ingenious invention of the punch, by means of which any number of duplicates of a letter could be struck, or cast, from the same matrix, he completed the discovery of printing nearly as it still exists.

Fust fully appreciated the value of this important discovery, and at once received Schoeffer into partnership. Their names first appear together on a Psalter, bearing the date 1457, and they continued to print jointly till Fust's death, in 1466. The esteem and gratitude of the wealthy goldsmith and printer were further manifested soon after, by bestowing on his ingenious partner the hand of his daughter in marriage. Meanwhile every means were adopted by the partners to conceal this important improvement, as well as to preserve the whole art of printing secret. An oath of secrecy was administered to all whom they employed; and every means was used to deceive inquirers as to the nature of their work.

The whole proceedings of Fust show the crafty scheming of a wealthy speculator greedy of gain. The following are the remarks of Mr. Anderson on this subject in his interesting "Annals of the English Bible:"—

"The year 1462 arrived, and this was a marked and decisive era in the history of this extraordinary invention, not merely for a second edition of the Latin Bible, in two volumes folio, *dated* 1462, and now executed according to the improved state of the art; but on account of what took place in Mentz at the same moment.

A change had arrived, far from being anticipated by these the inventors of printing, and one which they, no doubt, regarded as the greatest calamity which could have befallen them. Gutenberg had been the father of printing, and Schoeffer the main improver of it, while Fust, not only by his ingenuity but his wealth, had assisted both; but all these men were bent upon keeping the art

secret; and, left to themselves, unquestionably they would have confined the printing-press to Mentz as long as they lived. Fust and Schoeffer, however, especially eager to acquire wealth, had resolved to proceed in a very unhallowed course, by palming off their productions as *manuscripts*, that so they might obtain a larger price for each copy. The glory of promoting or extending the art must now, therefore, be immediately and suddenly taken from them. Invention, of whatever character, like Nature itself, is but a name for an effect, whose cause is God. The ingenuity he gives to whomsoever he will, but he still reigns over the invention, and directs its future progress. At this crisis, therefore, just as if to make the reference to himself more striking, and upon our part more imperative, we have only to observe what then took place, and the consequences which immediately followed.

Fust and Schoeffer had completed their first dated Bible, of 1462, but this very year the city of Mentz must be invaded. Like Constantinople, it was taken by storm, and by a member too of that body, who in future times so lamented over the effects of printing. This was the warlike Archbishop Adolphus. The consequences were immediate, and afford an impressive illustration of that ease with which Providence accomplishes its mightiest operations. The mind of Europe was to be roused to action, and materials sufficient to engage all its activity must not be wanting. But this demanded nothing more than the capture of *two* cities, and these two far distant from each other! If when Constantinople fell in the east, the Greeks, with their manuscripts and learning, rushed into Italy, to join the already awakened Italian scholars; Mentz also is taken, and the art of printing spreads over Europe with a rapidity which still excites astonishment.

This city, once deprived by the sword of the conqueror of those laws and privileges which belonged to it as a

member of the Rhenish Commercial Confederation, all previous ties or obligations between master and servant were loosened, and oaths of secrecy imposed under a former regime were at an end. Amidst the confusion that ensued, the operative printers felt free to accept of invitations from any quarter. But whither will they bend their steps, or in what direction will the art proceed? Where will it meet with its warmest welcome, and in which capital of Europe will it be first established. The reader may anticipate that the welcome came from Italy, but it is still more observable, that the first capital was *Rome!* Yes, after the capture of Mentz, Rome and its vicinity, the city of the future *Index Expurgatorius*, gave most cordial welcome. The art, while in its cradle in Italy, must be nursed under the inquisitive and much amused eye of the Pontiff himself!

One might very naturally have presumed, that the enemies of light and learning, or of all innovation, would have been up in arms; and it is certainly not the least extraordinary fact connected with the memorable invention of printing, that no alarm was expressed,—neither at its discovery, nor its first application, even though the very first book was the *Bible.* The brief-men, or copyists, it is true, were angry in prospect of losing their means of subsistence; and in Paris they had talked of necromancy, or the black art, being the origin of all this; but there was not a whisper of the kind in Italy. Indeed, as to an existing establishment of any kind, any where, no dangerous consequences were apprehended by a single human being as far as we know; but most certainly none by the reigning Pontiff himself, or even by the conclave with all its wonted foresight. On the contrary, the invention was hailed with joy, and its first effects were received with enthusiasm. Not one man appears to have perceived its bearing, or once dreamt of its ultimate results. No, the German invention was to be carried to its perfection on

Italian ground. Residents and official persons in Rome itself, are to be its first promoters, and that under the immediate eye of Paul the Second, a man by no means friendly either to learning or learned men.

This curious incident is rendered much more so by one or two others in immediate connexion with it. Even while the art was yet a *secret* in Germany, the very first individual of whom we read as having longed for its being brought to Rome, was a Cardinal, Nicholas de Cusa; the first ardent promoter of the press in that city was a bishop, John Andreas, the Bishop of Aleria and Secretary to the Vatican Library. He furnished the manuscripts for the press, prepared the editions, and added the epistles dedicatory. It had been on the summit of a hill, twenty-eight miles east of Rome, near Subiaco, and close by the villa once occupied by the Emperor Nero, that the first printing-press was set up. In the monastery there, by Conrad Sweynheim and Arnold Pannartz from Germany, an edition of Lactantius' Institutions was finished in the year 1465; but next year they removed, by invitation, into the mansion-house of two knights in Rome itself. They were two brothers, Peter and Francis de Maximis. Here it was that, aided by the purse of Andreas, the first font of types in the *Roman* character, so called ever since, was prepared, and all other materials being ready, they commenced with such spirit and vigour, that the Secretary of the Vatican 'scarcely allowed himself time to sleep.' Let him speak once for himself, in one of his dedications prefixed to Jerome's Epistles.

'It was,' says he to the Pontiff, 'in your days, that among other divine favours this blessing was bestowed on the Christian world, that every poor scholar can purchase for himself a library for a small sum—that those volumes which heretofore could scarce be bought for an hundred crowns may now be procured for less than twenty, very well printed, and free from those faults with which manu-

scripts used to abound—for such is the art of our printers and letter-makers, that *no ancient or modern discovery is comparable to it.* Surely the German nation deserves *our* highest esteem for the invention of the most useful of arts. The wish of the noble and divine Cardinal Cusa is now, in your time, accomplished, who earnestly desired that this sacred art, which then seemed rising in Germany, might be brought to Rome. It is my chief aim in this epistle to let posterity know that the art of printing and type-making was brought to Rome under Paul the Second. Receive, then, the first volume of St. Jerome graciously,—and take the excellent masters of the art, Conrad Sweyn heim and Arnold Pannartz, Germans, under your protection.'

This Pontiff, named Peter Barbo, and a *Venetian* by birth, had no sooner come into office, in 1464, than he immediately suppressed the College of *Abbreviators*, and turned out all the clerks of the breves, regardless of the sums they had paid for their places. And although this body was composed of the most distinguished men of learning and genius in Rome, he chose to say they were of no use, or unlearned! Yet now, scarcely two years after, the same man was sauntering into the *printing* office; nay, it is affirmed that he visited it 'frequently, and examined with admiration every branch of this new art!' Would he have done this had he foreseen the consequences? And what must future Pontiffs have sometimes thought or said as to his idle simplicity, or his lack of foresight?"

We cannot, however, follow the printing-press through the interesting events which characterized its appearance in the different capitals of Europe. In Rome alone, no fewer than twelve thousand four hundred and seventy-five volumes were printed in the brief period of five years from 1467, including a beautiful edition of the BIBLE. Venice followed her example, producing specimens of

typography still coveted for their beauty. Paris, Antwerp, Brussels, Westminster, Oxford, London, Geneva, Leipsic, all followed the example of Rome. Little did the sovereign Pontiff dream of the power of this adversary he had fostered at the very seat of spiritual despotism.

CHAPTER VII.

THE REWARD.

WE shall devote the remainder of our space to the history of Gutenberg, the persevering and enthusiastic genius to whom the world owes this invaluable boon. The best authorities inform us that he had spent his whole estate in working out the difficult art that was to supersede the slow and costly labours of the copiers. He still, however, possessed his own valuable secret, of which no law could deprive him. Undismayed, he resumed his labours, and again obtaining for himself a limited font of types, he carried on printing on his own account, though on a limited scale, till the year 1465. The fragments of his work are among the rarest and most valued treasures of typographical collections; among these is now generally ranked the Mazarine Bible, highly prized among the first editions of the Scriptures, and believed to have been an early production of Gutenberg's press. He appears to have remained in Mentz, when most of his early rivals were scattered by the events already related. The growing appreciation of his labours, and the value which began to be attached to his invention, were no doubt reflected even then in some degree on the discoverer.

Strange and manifold were the changes that had occurred since young Gutenberg fled to Strasbourg to escape the vengeance of the nobles of Mentz. In 1465,

he was appointed by Adolphus, the Elector of that city, as one of the gentlemen of his court; with an annual pension, which rendered him no longer dependent on the art which he had pursued with so much zeal, and which had proved such a source of trouble and vexation to him. It is uncertain whether he still followed out the work of printing, though he is generally believed to have continued his labours in the art till the last. He did not very long survive this timely and very honourable mark of estimation from the Elector of Mentz; his death took place in that city, in February, 1468, only three years after his appointment to a situation in the Elector's household.

Every year that has succeeded that in which the inventor of this noble art was committed to the grave, has sufficed to show more clearly the value of his discovery. It has been reserved to our own day, however, to demonstrate its true capabilities. Even after all the presses of Europe had been brought into operation, books still remained a costly luxury, attainable only by a wealthy and privileged class. When the English Bible was introduced by Cranmer, under the sanction of Henry the Eighth, it was chained to a pillar in the parish church, that the costly treasure might thus be rendered accessible to all who could read. Now we see, by means of the steam printing-press, the stereotyper's plates, and above all, the vast multiplication of readers, books issued for a few pence or shillings, which not many years since would have cost as many pounds. The poor man may now command a library which the wealthiest would have coveted only a century ago; and a valuable collection of books may be purchased for a moiety of the price of a single manuscript, or even a printed volume, of the fifteenth century.

The following is the graphic description furnished by Fox, in his "Acts and Monuments," of one of the incidents connected with this early attempt to render the

invention of Gutenberg available for the general diffusion of knowledge. The subject has been recently selected by one of our most talented artists, George Harvey, for a painting, since beautifully engraved, of "The First Reading of the Bible in the Crypt of Old St. Paul's."

"The Bibles," says Fox, "being set up upon divers pillars in Paul's Church, fixed unto them with chains, for all men to read in them that would, great multitudes would resort thither to hear one John Porter, because he could read well and had an audible voyce. Boner and his chaplains, being grieved withall, (and the world beginning then to frown upon the Gospellers,) sent for the aforesaid Porter, and rebuked him very sharply for his reading. But Porter answered him that he trusted he had done nothing contrary to the law, neither contrary to his advertisements which he had fixed over every Bible.

Boner then laid unto his charge that he had made expositions upon the Text, and gathered great multitudes about him to make tumults. He answered, he trusted that should not be proved by him. But in fine, Boner sent him to Newgate, where he was miserably fettered in irons, both leggs and arms, with a collar of iron about his neck, fastened to the wall in the dungeon, among other prisoners, who lay there for felony and murder; where, Porter being amongst them, hearing and seeing their wickedness and blasphemy, exhorted them to amendment of life, and gave unto them such instructions as he had learned of the Scriptures; for which his so doing, he was complained on, and so carried downe and laid in the lower dungeon of all, oppressed with bolts and irons, where, within six or eight days after, he was found dead."

Gutenberg descended to the grave, as we have seen, with only very partial and insufficient acknowledgments for his mighty boon. It is well, however, that genius should know its reward is not to be sought in the applause or the gratitude of contemporaries. The instructor of his

time must be, from that very cause, above his time, and therefore ought no more to seek the acknowledgment of his services from those to whom he proves a benefactor, than does the teacher look for his reward in the gratitude and the appreciative applause of his infant pupils. If they should not even strew tardy and unavailing wreaths of honour above the turf where the weary one hath at length sunk to rest, what matters it? His work is accomplished, and has gone forth, influencing all times. In how peculiar a manner may it be said of Gutenberg, what is true to some extent of all men of genius, "though dead, he yet speaketh."

It has not, however, been the fate of the inventor of the printing-press to be "to dumb forgetfulness a prey." Every succeeding age since his own has sufficed to demonstrate more clearly the value of his costly boon; and with the increasing knowledge of its value, a higher admiration has been conceived for him who patiently, and amid privations, and danger, and wrong, wrought out and perfected the wonderful yet simple device which formed the key to the storehouse of knowledge, and scattered the long-hoarded treasures with a generous and lavish hand. Posterity has done what could be accomplished to atone for the ingratitude and the pardonable ignorance of Gutenberg's contemporaries. An association has been formed in Germany, under the name of the Gutenberg Society, to which nearly all the eminent and influential men of the Rhenish Provinces, connected with literature or the press, belong. A yearly meeting is held by them at Mentz, to honour his memory, and to celebrate his invention. A more durable, and no less worthy proof of admiration, has since been furnished in the same city where his important labours and his life were both brought to a close. A monument, exhibiting the highest arts of the sculptor, has been reared in the city of Mentz, amid

prolonged festivities and every demonstration of national triumph, in honour of him who once fled, a hunted fugitive, from its gates. So great are the changes that time and THE PRINTING-PRESS have wrought in the minds of men.

The following very interesting account of this honourable display of a people's gratitude to one of their noblest benefactors, is thus described by Charles Knight, the talented author of the Life of Caxton, our own first English Printer. "During the summer of 1837, a statue of John Gutenberg, by the great sculptor Thorwaldsen, was erected at Mentz, (or Mayence,) and on the 14th of August and the following days, a festival was held there, upon the occasion of the inauguration of the monument. Abundant evidence, in addition to what we have stated, has been brought forward of late years, to show that Gutenberg deserves all the honours of having conceived, and in great part perfected, an art which has produced the most signal effects upon the destinies of mankind. At that festival of Mentz, at which many hundred persons were assembled, from all parts of Europe, to do honour to the inventor of printing, no rival pretensions were put forward; although many of the compatriots of Coster of Haarlem were present. The fine statue of Gutenberg was opened amidst an universal burst of enthusiasm. Never were the shouts of a vast multitude raised on a more elevating occasion;—never were the triumphs of intellect celebrated with greater fervour. The statue of Gutenberg, who had won for his city the gratitude of the world, was opened with demonstratións of popular feeling such as have been wont only to greet the car of the conqueror. The poor printer of Mentz indeed achieved a conquest; the fruits of his bloodless victory are imperishable; but it is honourable beyond comparison to the present generation of the citizens of Mentz to have felt that this victory

of mind, which has made all future victories of the same nature permanent, was deserving of a trophy as enduring almost as the invention which it celebrates.

Passing his life amidst the ceaseless activity that belongs to the commerce of literature in London, the writer of this felt no common interest in the enthusiasm which the festival in honour of Gutenberg called forth throughout Germany; and he determined to attend that celebration. The fine statue which was to be opened to view on the 14th of August, had been erected by a general subscription, to which all Europe was invited to contribute. We apprehend that the English, amidst the incessant claims upon their attention for the support of all sorts of undertakings, whether of a national or individual character, had known little of the purpose which the good citizens of Mentz had been advocating with unabated zeal for several years;—and perhaps the object itself was not calculated to call forth any very great liberality on the part of those who are often directed in their bounties as much by fashion as by their own convictions. Be that as it may, England literally gave nothing towards the monument of a man whose invention has done as much as any other single cause to make England what she is. The remoteness of the cause may also have lessened its importance; and some people, who, without any deserts of their own, are enjoying more than a full share of the blessings which have been shed upon us by the progress of intellect, (which determines the progress of national wealth,) have a sort of instinctive notion that the spread of knowledge is a spread of something inimical to the pretentions of mere riches. We met with a lady on board the steam-boat ascending the Rhine, two days before the festival of Mentz, who, whilst she gave us a most elaborate account of the fashionable dulness of the baths of Baden and Nassau, and all the other German watering-places, told us by all means to avoid Mentz during the

following week, as a crowd of low people from all parts would be there, to make a great fuss about a printer who had been dead two or three hundred years. The low people did assemble in great crowds: it was computed that at least fifteen thousand strangers had arrived to do honour to the first printer.

The modes in which a large population displays its enthusiasm are pretty much the same throughout the world. If the sentiment which collects men together be very heart-stirring, all the outward manifestations of the sentiment harmonize with its real truth. Thus, processions, and orations, and public dinners, and pageantries, which in themselves are vain and empty, are important when the persons whom they collect together have one common feeling which for the time is all-pervading. We never saw such a popular fervour as prevailed at Mentz at the festival of August 1837. The statue was to be opened on Monday the 14th; but on the Sunday evening the name of Gutenberg was rife through all the streets. In the morning all Mentz was in motion by six o'clock; and at eight a procession was formed to the cathedral, which, if it was not much more imposing than some of the processions of trades in London and other cities, was conducted with a quiet precision which evidenced that the people felt they were engaged in a solemn act. The fine old cathedral was crowded;—the Bishop of Mentz performed high mass;—the first Bible printed by Gutenberg was displayed. What a field for reflection was here opened! The First Bible, in connexion with the imposing pageantries of Roman Catholicism—the Bible, in great part a sealed book to the body of the people; the service of God in a tongue unknown to the larger number of worshippers;—but that first Bible the germ of millions of Bibles that have spread the light of Christianity throughout all the habitable globe! The mass ended, the procession again advanced to the adjacent square, where the

statue was to be opened. Here was erected a vast amphitheatre, where, seated under their respective banners, were deputations from all the great cities of Europe. Amidst salvos of artillery the veil was removed from the statue, and a hymn was sung by a thousand voices. Then came orations;—then dinners—balls—oratorios—boat-races—processions by torch-light. For three days the population of Mentz was kept in a state of high excitement; and the echo of the excitement went through Germany,—and Gutenberg! Gutenberg! was toasted in many a bumper of Rhenish wine amidst this cordial and enthusiastic people."

Such is the lively and graphic account of this interesting writer, who himself witnessed the scene he describes with so much feeling. There is surely something very remarkable in beholding a great nation assembled thus to do honour to the inventor of a peaceful art, whose application is now committed to humble though intelligent workmen, and whose inventor was himself an equally humble and unnoticed mechanic. To see "a crowd of low people," as the fine lady designated them, thus mustering to acknowledge the nobility of such a man, is perhaps as striking an evidence as could be produced of the revolutions which his own discovery has wrought. Rude barons who were once the sole *great men* of the empire have long since been forgotten.

"The knights are dust, and their good swords are rust."

Their achievements are buried in oblivion like themselves, and their proud lineage has perished, or—far more mournful condemnation—has descended to the degenerate representative of a noble ancestry. Meanwhile the names that Germany boasts of are no longer those whose proud titles were once emblazoned alone on the rolls of fame. The poor monk of Wittenberg is a prouder boast than them all. His compeers and his scholars are held in

an esteem no longer accorded to the heroes of the sword; and the honoured name of the poor mechanic of Mentz and Strasbourg is coupled with the Schiller, Schlegel, and Goethe, and the noble list of the heroes of the pen whom his glorious discovery furnished with weapons by which to win their immortality.

The reflections suggested to the mind of the interesting writer we have already quoted, on beholding the demonstration of popular gratitude and admiration for the inventor of printing, are peculiarly striking and apposite. "Even in one," he remarks, "who could not boast of belonging to the land in which printing was invented, the universality of the mighty effects of this art, when rightly considered, would produce almost a corresponding enthusiasm. It is difficult to look upon the great changes that have been effected during the last four centuries, and which are still in progress everywhere around us, and not connect them with printing and its inventor. The castles on the Rhine, under whose ruins we travelled back from Mentz, perished before the powerful combinations of the people of the towns. The petty feudal despots fell when the burghers had acquired wealth and knowledge. But the progress of despotism upon a larger scale could not have been arrested had the art of Gutenberg not been discovered. The strongholds of military power still frown over the same majestic river. The Rhine has seen its petty fortresses crumble into decay;—Ehrenbreitstein is more strong than ever. But even Ehrenbreitstein will fall before the power of mind. The Rhine is crowded with steam-boats where the feudal lord once levied tribute upon the frail bark of the fisherman: and the approaches to the Rhine from France and Belgium are becoming a great series of railroads. Such communications will make war a game much more difficult to play; and when mankind are thoroughly civilized, it will never be played again. Seeing, then, what intellect has done

and is doing, we may well venerate the memory of Gutenberg of Mentz."

How astonishing, when we reflect on it, has been the effect of the simple and seemingly easy invention of the German mechanic. By its means the heroes of Reformation, the pioneers of science, the cultivators of learning, and all the teachers of the people, have had weapons put into their hands wherewith to vanquish opposition, and tools given them by which to clear the way and work out the great designs on which have depended the civilization and enlightenment, and the evangelization of the world. What could Luther, or Cranmer, or Knox, have done without the printing-press at their command? What would all the zeal of their co-operators have effected in disseminating their views or in exposing the vices of the system they assailed? Rome would have made a triumphant bonfire of all their manuscripts; she would have committed to the same flames the few daring confessors and apostles of truth, and the night of ignorance and superstition would have settled again with deeper gloom upon the nations.

To the invention of printing all the grand discoveries in science, and all the valuable contributions of modern ages to literature, may be traced. Man worked before, a solitary and unaided student when he sought to penetrate into the mysteries of nature. It was a locked treasure of which he had no key, and when, by arduous years of study, he had at length learned to unlock one or two of its many secret fastenings, death came, and it was left to others merely as he found it. The locks closed again, and the new student found no vantage ground prepared from whence to renew the search. How different is it now: the poorest student may avail himself of the labours of previous ages; even the errors of his predecessors are valuable records for him. He escapes the toil which they found unfruitful; he follows on the track in which they

achieved success that promises still higher results; and the world at length reaps the fruits of victories thus won by successive labours in the cause.

Viewed in this light, we may say, in no exaggerating spirit, that the discovery of Gutenberg contained the germ of all other discoveries. By means of it the triumphs of steam have been achieved,—the railroad has united remote cities,—the electric telegraph has almost annihilated time and space. But for the facilities which printing affords for recording the observations and discoveries made in many countries, and at different periods, and preserving them in an accessible form for constant reference, ages might elapse with fewer discoveries than have been accomplished within a few years.

The influence on the political state of the world has been no less great. Newspapers originated in the time of the great civil wars in England, and have gone on with increasing power ever since. The press has become the great engine of warfare, and all its triumphs are on the side of liberty.

The moral and religious state of the world has been no less mightily affected by this new power. Where were our Bible, and Missionary, and Tract Societies, but for the printing-press? The pulpit itself has received new powers from this widely pervading source, and a powerful colleague that can, silently and unnoticed, surpass it in its instructing and converting influence. "Go ye forth into all nations, and preach the Gospel to every creature," was the commission intrusted by the departing Saviour to his Apostles; but the commission has received a new form and an increasing power, more effectual in its operations because less dependent on the agency of man. The Word of God, translated into all languages, has been freely disseminated through many regions hitherto sunk in darkness and the shadow of death. Its still voice has been listened to where no preacher's voice dared to be heard.

Amid the persecuted wanderers on the Alps and Pyrenees, in the benighted lands of Italy and Spain, on the continent of South America, in the dark places of India and Africa, the Word of God has made its way. "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." How great has been the work thus silently accomplished no man can tell; but the many cases in which the Word of God has proved a simple but all-sufficient instructor gives us just ground to believe that in countless unknown cases it has been no less effectual in its operations.

When we come to consider the invention of Gutenberg in this light, how great is the value which it possesses. We cannot indeed doubt that he foresaw some of the great results that were to be the fruit of his labours, but how imperfect must his brightest dreams have been, and how far short of the reality. We view his discovery rather as one of the means appointed by Providence for bringing about the Reformation in Europe, and all the innumerable blessings that have followed in its train.

Whatever may have been the views entertained by Gutenberg while prosecuting his important work, or whatever the opinions he himself held on the momentous questions of faith and polity that soon after agitated Europe, there can be no question that he was in reality one of the greatest reformers that Europe has known. Those who have most faithfully devoted their lives to the cause of truth, have only very imperfectly foreseen the grand results that they were working out; and many have been honoured to be "fellow-workers with God," in the great cause of liberty and truth, who knew not that they were doing more than completing their own humble and short-sighted designs. It would be doing injustice, however, to the inventor of printing in Europe, to deny him the attribute of true genius, little as we

know of those minute details of his laborious life which would furnish the evidence from which to arrive at a true estimate of the compass of his mind. If we judge of the force of his intellectual powers as we see them applied to surmount the numerous difficulties that beset his course, we shall find abundant proof of that perseverance in defiance of disappointments, and that indomitable self-reliance which ever distinguish the true man of genius from his less gifted fellow-men.

It is the peculiar characteristic of genius to be turned aside from its true course by no obstacle, and to permit no disappointment to impede its path. In the pursuit of its grand aim it follows on as if guided by a divine instinct. It has a work to accomplish, and cannot rest until the appointed aim is attained, and the goal won. The history of the human intellect discloses many instances of this; some of them, doubtless, in no way inferior to that of Gutenberg; but the infinite value of the results which have been brought about as the issue of his ill-requited toil, give a pre-eminence to the self-sacrifice by which it was accomplished. It was a bleak and chilling spring-time, and the ripening summer yielded its fructifying rays with a grudging and niggard hand. Shall not then the world rejoice in the abundant harvest, and bless the labours of the husbandman, who sowed in hope and in sorrow, that distant ages might rejoice, in entering on the realization of his generous anticipations?

PIERPAOLO VERGERIO,

BISHOP OF ISTRIA.



Spiera on his death bed attended by Vergerio.

ABOUT the year 1504, a child was born at Capo d'Istria, upon the Gulf of Venice, destined to fill offices of eminent trust, and to obtain all but the highest honours in the Church of Rome; and then, pursuing another course, to exhibit a life characterized by such striking vicissitudes as only fail to leave a deep impression on contemporary narratives and the history of that century, because it was a period of such mighty struggles, involving consequences so momentous, that all

but the names of the very foremost leaders are lost amid the shouts of victory or the cry of defeat.

Of his early life, as of that of so many others who filled influential stations during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, scarcely any record has been preserved. He was sprung from a family several of whose members had borne an honourable share in the early revival and cultivation of letters, and appears to have enjoyed the best advantages that Italy afforded at that period for acquiring all the learning of the time. He obtained the rudiments of his education, most probably, at one of the monasteries which then abounded in Italy, as elsewhere, and atoned for many evils inseparable from the monastic system, by preserving and multiplying the only libraries that then existed, and by furnishing the means of learning to those who desired to devote their lives to such pursuits.

From the scene of his early studies Vergerio proceeded to the University of Padua, where he highly distinguished himself among the students at that school of learning, and at length obtained to the honourable degree of doctor of civil law.

The fame of the University of Wittenberg, the great centre and source of continental Protestantism, had early penetrated to Italy, and the young doctor of laws, having attained to all the learning that Padua could furnish, became desirous of proceeding to the German university. The occurrences which early attracted the attention of the learned men of Italy to the proceedings of the German scholars, before they had learned to scorn them as a body of heretics, are deserving of notice, as exercising an important influence on the whole course of the Reformation movement.

The following is the account given of it in the History of the Reformation in Italy:—

" A controversy, which had been carried on for several

years with great warmth in Germany, and which was at last brought before the papal court for decision, deserves notice here, as having contributed, in no small degree to direct the attention of the Italians, at an early period, to the reformed opinions. A monk of Cologne, a convert from Judaism, either from hostility to learning, or with a view of extorting money from his countrymen, obtained a decree from the imperial chamber, ordaining all Jewish books, with the exception of the Bible, to be committed to the flames, as filled with blasphemies against Christ. John Reuchlin, or Capnio, a learned man of Suabia, and the restorer of Hebrew literature among Christians, exerted himself, both privately and from the press, to prevent the execution of this barbarous decree. His successful opposition exposed him to the resentment of the monks, and sentence was pronounced against him, first by the divines of Cologne, and afterwards by the Sorbonne at Paris. Reuchlin appealed to Rome, and the friends of learning determined to make his cause a common one. Erasmus and other distinguished individuals wrote warmly in his favour to their friends at Rome, of whom they had some in the sacred college. The monks exerted themselves with equal zeal to defeat a party which they had long hated, and from whom they had much to dread. No cause of the kind had, for a long time, excited such general interest. On the one side were ranked the monks, the most devoted clients of the papal throne; on the other, the men who had attracted the admiration of Europe by their talents and writings. The court of Rome was averse to offend either side, and by means of those arts which it knew so well how to employ in delicate cases, protracted the affair from time to time. During this interval, the monks and their supporters were subjected to the lash of the most cutting satires; and the ultimate sentence, enjoining silence on both parties, was scarcely ratified, when the controversy between Luther and the

preachers of indulgences arose, and was brought before the same tribunal for decision."

The learned men of Wittenberg presented themselves before those of Italy, as the advocates of a cause in which both were alike interested, and in which the doctors of the Italian peninsula were astonished to find as keen a love of letters, and as profound knowledge displayed by the hitherto despised scholars of Germany, as could have been manifested by the most zealous encouragers of learning in Italy. All this was paving the way for the important events that followed. Luther was about to strike at the very root of the papal usurpation, and it was well that its abettors should have been brought to acknowledge the learning and worth of their antagonist, and thereby to commit themselves to an opinion in his favour, before they summoned every missile of contumely and abuse, to supply the failure of the more legitimate weapons of learning and truth.

The first introduction of the name of Vergerio, the subject of this sketch, in Dr. M'Crie's interesting account of this period, is prefaced by the following remarks:—

"It was not to be expected that a dispute managed by a friar, in an obscure corner of Germany, against the sale of indulgences, a traffic which had long been carried on under the auspices and for the profit of the see of Rome, would at first attract much attention in Italy. But the boldness of his own mind, and the provoking impudence of his antagonists, having led Luther to persevere in his opposition, and gradually to extend his censure to other abuses, his name and opinions soon became the topic of general conversation without the limits of his native country. Two years from the time of his first appearance against indulgences had not elapsed, until his writings found their way into Italy, where they met with a favourable reception from the learned. It must have been highly gratifying to the Reformer to receive the fol-

lowing information, in a letter addressed to him by John Froben, a celebrated printer at Basle. 'Blasius Salmonius, a bookseller of Leipsic, presented me, at last Frankfort fair, with several treatises composed by you, which being approved by all learned men, I immediately put to the press, and sent six hundred copies to France and Spain. They are sold at Paris, and read and approved of even by the Sorbonists, as my friends have assured me. Several learned men there have said, that they of a long time have wished to see such freedom in those who treat divine things. Calvus also, a bookseller of Pavia, a learned man, and addicted to the Muses, has carried a great part of the impression into Italy. He promises to send epigrams written in praise of you by all the learned in Italy; such favour have you gained to yourself and the cause of Christ by your constancy, courage, and dexterity!' A letter has also been preserved, written about this time by an individual in Rome, and applauding the spirit and writings of Luther. Burchard Schenk, a German nobleman who had embraced a monastic life, and resided at Venice, writes, on the 19th of September 1520, to Spalatinus, chaplain to the Elector of Saxony:—'According to your request I have read the works of Martin Luther, and I can assure you he has been much esteemed in this place for some time past. But the common saying is, 'Let him beware of the Pope!' Upwards of two months ago ten copies of his books were brought here and instantly purchased, before I had heard of them; but in the beginning of this month, a mandate from the Pope and the Patriarch of Venice arrived, prohibiting them; and a strict search being instituted among the booksellers, one imperfect copy was found and seized. I had endeavoured to obtain that copy, but the bookseller durst not dispose of it.' In a letter written during the following year, the same person states that the senate of Venice had at last reluctantly consented to the publication of the

papal bull against Luther, but had taken care that it should not be read until the people had left the church. Two circumstances of a curious kind appear from this correspondence. The one is that Schenk had a commission from the Elector of Saxony to purchase relics for the collegiate church of Wittenberg; but soon after the period referred to, that commission was revoked, and the relics sent back to Italy to be sold at what price they would bring; 'for, (writes Spalatinus,) here even the common people so despise them, as to think it sufficient, as it certainly is, if they be taught from Scripture to have faith and confidence in God, and love to their neighbour.' The other fact is, that the person employed by Schenk to collect relics for the Elector was Vergerio, afterwards Bishop of Capo d'Istria, and Legate from the Pope to the German princes, but who subsequently renounced popery, and became zealously instrumental in spreading the reformed doctrine in Italy and elsewhere. The character given of him at this early period of his life is worthy of notice, as the popish writers, after his defection, endeavoured in every possible way to discredit his authority, and tarnish his reputation. Schenk describes him as 'a most excellent young man, who had distinguished himself among the students of law at Padua, and was desirous of finishing his studies at Wittenberg, under the auspices and patronage of the Elector Frederick.'"

Vergerio, however, did not proceed to Wittenberg as a learner; he was destined to go there at a later period with a very different purpose, and with very different and unexpected results from those which the young doctor of Padua had in view.

CHAPTER II.

THE PAPAL-LEGATE.

THE first occupation of Vergerio, after the completion of his studies, affords one of the highest tributes to his learning. He was chosen one of the Professors of the University where he had taken his degree, and he continued for some years to lecture with great success to the students of Padua. The first clerical appointment which he received was that of Vicar to the Podesta, the duties of which he appears to have fulfilled along with those of his professorship. From Padua he went to Venice; and there he was no less distinguished for his oratory than he had been for his learning at Padua.

Vergerio, however, was destined to play his part in more important scenes. The fame of his learning and eloquence speedily brought him under the notice of the Pope, Clement the Seventh, who, in 1530, appointed him papal Legate, and sent him into Germany, to the court of Ferdinand, King of the Romans, and brother of the Emperor, Charles the Fifth. He remained there throughout the whole of that pontificate, advancing the interests of the Court of Rome, and exerting all his influence in favour of the Church, and in opposition to the progress of the Reformed doctrines which were then being so rapidly extended, under the teaching, and by means of the writings, of Luther. One of the special objects in regard to which the Legate was enjoined to exercise his utmost influence and shill, was the prevention of the assembly of a General Council in Germany. The students of the history of the Reformation are well aware that it was only after years of study, and by very slow degrees, that Luther arrived at the conviction of the utter incompatibility of the

supremacy of the Pope with the existence of a pure and scriptural church. His early hope, as well as that of many others of the friends of truth, and even of the honest adherents of the Church of Rome, was in the assembly of a General Council, which should take into consideration the state of the Church, and by a salutary reform of its most glaring abuses preserve it in unbroken unity. The Popes, however, and the College of Cardinals, had little sympathy with such a desire. Already popes had been dethroned, and the despotism of the tiara subjected to the dictation of earthly crowns, by such unmanageable assemblies, and Clement dreaded above all things the gathering of another council, where his untractable German opponents would exercise so large an influence.

Vergerio exerted himself resolutely to secure the great object of his mission. He acted vigorously on behalf of his master's interests, and strove by every means in his power to enlist the King of the Romans in opposition to such a project, and to secure his exertion for the extinction of heresy.

On the 5th of October 1534, Alexander Farnese succeeded to the vacant throne of the Roman Church, on the death of Clement the Seventh, and assumed the title of Paul the Third. "He was," says Ranke, "as thorough a worldling as ever was any pope before him." He became fully imbued with all the refined tastes which characterized the era of the revival of letters in Italy. "He exhibited," says the same writer, "the elegant erudition and the feeling for art which are characteristic of that epoch; nor was he untinctured with its morals." Such, indeed, were the licentious excesses of his early life that his mother found it necessary at one period to have him imprisoned in the Castle of St. Angelo, in order to prevent him carrying on a disgraceful amour. He availed himself, however, of the pre-occupation of the gaolers, in consequence of their

share in the celebration of some of the festivities of the Church, and in an unguarded moment, during the procession of Corpus Christi Day, he let himself down by a rope and effected his escape. His acknowledgment afterwards of an illegitimate son and daughter, did not, however, at all interfere with his advancement to the highest offices of the Church. He was created a Cardinal in early life, and obtained many of the richest livings of the Church, whose revenues were spent by him in the erection of the Farnese Palace, and others of the most costly and beautiful architectural works of that period.

Very shortly after the accession of the Cardinal Farnese to the Pontificate, the Legate Vergerio was recalled to Rome, but only to receive fresh proofs of confidence and favour from the head of the Church. The principal object declared by Paul the Third in his recall, was to obtain exact information from him respecting the aspect of religious matters in Germany, that he might the more readily frame his future proceedings so as most effectually to promote the interests of the popedom. The crafty policy of that Pope was ever to disguise his own opinions while he encouraged the confidence of others; and acting on this system, Vergerio was commissioned to return to Germany with assurances of the willingness of the Pope to concur in all those demands which had been so steadily resisted by his predecessor. "He was sent back," says a recent writer, "to declare the readiness of the Pope to hold a General Council, but to take care, at the same time, under the semblance of the greatest openness and simplicity, to learn what form the Protestants would insist upon in reference to the qualifications, votings, and disputations of the council; that there might be such terms and rules imposed upon them, as he might be sure they would never consent to; by which course the odium of not holding the council would fall on them. Vergerio was also instructed to exasperate the princes of the empire

against Henry the Eighth of England, whose dominions the Pope had it in contemplation to bestow upon those who would conquer them; and he received a secret article to tamper with Luther and Melancthon, in order to bring them over to the cause of Rome. Little did Vergerio suspect, when he entered upon this evil commission, that his principles of action were soon to undergo a thorough change. But the grace of God can conquer, and has often overcome the mightiest obstacles, rearing up men to build the faith which, like Paul, they once destroyed. Such was the case in the present instance; and the disinterestedness of the subject of the change admits not of being questioned. He sacrificed temporal interest, and braved temporal ill; he could gain nothing by espousing the cause of truth but reproach, persecution, and poverty.

On this commission Vergerio entered in 1535; and in the course of his negociations came into contact with most of the German princes. He had an interview with Luther at Wittenberg. It is said that he had been directed to treat Luther with great civility, and to make him the amplest promises; neither flattery, however, nor the most alluring offers had, on this or any other occasion, the slightest weight with the great German reformer. He proposed—but the ensnaring proposition was not acceded to—that the desired council should be held at Mantua, as though on account of the convenience of its situation for all parties concerned; but, in reality, to place within reach of papal vengeance all the heads of the Protestant party. Next year Vergerio returned to give a report respecting the success of his mission; and immediately afterwards departed for Naples to open negociations with Charles the Fifth, receiving, as a reward for previous services, the bishopric of Mondrusium, in Croatia. From a letter written by him at this time, he does not seem to have been fully satisfied with his promotion; but he thus concludes, 'She (his diocese) is a spouse that may be repu-

diated or changed.' Vergerio had been directed to propose to the Emperor the commencement of a war against the Lutherans, as the speediest and most satisfactory mode of settling the controversy. The Emperor came to Rome to consult respecting this, and warmly pressed upon the Pope the propriety of a General Council. The Pope demanded, and the Emperor consented, that the proposed council should be held within the precincts of Italy, at Mantua, and a bull was drawn up to that effect. The Protestants, however, were too clear-sighted not to discern the reasons of this step, which would place them completely at the mercy of the Pontiff. They refused to quit their own country; appealing to the case of Huss, to show how flagrantly the guardianship of a safe-conduct had before been broken. They laid open at large the fallacy and deceit of the Pope's conduct, and intimated their distrust of the Emperor also. From this period till 1541, Vergerio, who had been largely concerned in all these negociations, appears to have resided in Italy."

CHAPTER III.

THE CONFERENCE OF WORMS.

SOON after the return of Vergerio the second time from Germany, he was rewarded as we have seen by the appointment to the episcopal dignity, as Bishop of Mondrusium; a see which was in the patronage of Ferdinand, the King of the Romans, at whose court he had so long resided. Not long after his consecration as a bishop, he received a further accession to his rank and revenues, by being advanced to the see of Capo d'Istria, which he no doubt held along with that he had previously received, and which we may suppose would possess peculiar

attractions to him as being the highest honours of his native place.

During the following six years he appears to have resided constantly in Italy, attending, it may be, to the duties that devolved on him as a bishop of the Church, though at that period it was a rare virtue indeed to find a single dignitary of the Church who regarded his high office in any other light than as a source of revenue, and an instrument for the achievement of higher objects of worldly ambition.

In the year 1541, Vergerio was anew selected as the fittest person to be intrusted with an important foreign mission. He was commissioned to appear at the celebrated Diet of Worms, professedly as the representative of the King of France, but secretly intrusted with instructions from the Pope; it being conceived by that crafty and politic pontiff that he could much more effectually forward the objects of the court of Rome under such an assumed character, than if he were to go as the ostensible messenger and representative of his Holiness. "Vergerio," says Middleton, "with his usual industry and address, made a speech on the unity and peace of the Church, which he printed and circulated. In this speech he insisted chiefly upon arguments against holding a national council; for the Pope of all things could not endure that step,—and Vergerio knew very fully his secret thoughts. By Vergerio's means, in co-operation with other instruments, the conference at Worms was impeded, and at length dissolved. Every thing that artifice or evasion could do was attempted, and unhappily succeeded. Vergerio was in great favour with Ferdinand, King of Hungary, and was on such terms of esteem with him as to be godfather to one of his children, with the Marquis of Brandenburg and the Archbishop of Lodi."

Such was the crooked line of policy by which the Pope sought to bring about his own purposes, while professing

himself ready to accede to those of his opponents. The Bishop of Istria evidently lent himself heartily to forward the views of his master; and, under the guise of an eloquent defence of the unity of the Church, effectually thwarted the views of the Protestant party, who were then fixing all their hopes of the Reformation of the Church on the assembly of a General Council.

The incidents that followed this successful embassage of Vergerio are of a singularly striking nature. It is asserted by some writers of the period that the Pope was so much pleased with his efficient and successful execution of the delicate mission committed to him, that he had determined to confer on him the rank of cardinal on his return. From this it is affirmed that he was diverted by suspicions promulgated even thus early as to the soundness of his faith. "This," says Dr. M'Crie, "is denied by Pallavicini and Tiraboschi; but they allow that the Pope had received information against him, as having cultivated undue familiarity with the German heretics, and spoken favourably of them; and that, on this account, means were used to oblige him to return to Italy, and to convince him that he had incurred the displeasure of his superiors. This is confirmed by the letters of Cardinal Bembo. In a letter to his nephew, who appears to have held a high official situation in the Istrian government, the cardinal signifies that he was 'in a manner constrained by the Bishop of Capo d'Istria to recommend some of his relations, who, though innocent, as he alleged, had been thrown into prison.' This was on the 24th of September 1541; but on the 1st of February following, he expresses his satisfaction that his request had not been granted; and adds, 'I hear some things of that bishop, which, if true, are very bad—that he not only has portraits of Lutherans in his house, but also in the causes of certain citizens, has eagerly sought to favour in every way the

one party, whether right or wrong, and to bear down the other.'"

It appears exceedingly improbable, from all we know of Vergerio's conduct, both immediately previous and subsequent to this period, that any such decided change had taken place in his views as these remarks would imply; he evidently exerted himself zealously and heartily to execute his mission at Worms, and fully to carry out the schemes of the Pope in opposition to the views of the Protestant party. As a scholar, and a man of sound judgment and ready observation, it may be presumed that he could not be blind to the gross corruption and venality of the Church of Rome, and to the soundness and justice of many of the schemes which the friends of Reformation were desirous of bringing about. It may be readily believed, therefore, that his mind had received impressions favourable to the Reformation of the Church, as an object in which a man of letters, no less than an admirer of its polity, could sympathize. Beyond this, however, at this time, he certainly had not gone, and hundreds who died within the pale of the Church of Rome, and many even of those whose names are now reckoned among her greatest men, went much further, both in approving and testifying their favour for such views.

It is a curious and striking feature in the mental history of Luther, the great champion of the Reformation, that it was fully as much by the obstinate resistance of its opponents, and their refusal of every small and reasonable concession, that he was led on to clearer views of the iniquity of the whole system of the Church of Rome, and the impossibility of reconciling it with the Word of God and the Church which Christ has purchased with his blood. Even so it was with the Bishop of Istria. In all human probability the cardinal's hat would at this period have finally secured him as the devoted ally and partisan

of the Romish system. God, however, had better things in store for him. If he had now any real doubts as to the validity of that faith and worship to which he was formally attached, it was a mere intellectual challenge of its sufficiency as a wise and consistent scheme when brought to the test of human wisdom and learning. Something far different was required before he should be prepared to renounce a system that possessed for its votaries such costly rewards and honours as he had already shared. Religion, in fact, had to become a thing not of the head but of the heart, and then all would become clear and easy, which was now full of doubts, difficulties, and uncertainties.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ITALIAN BROTHERS.

The Bishop of Istria, on his return to Rome, speedily became aware of the suspicions under which he had fallen; and we may readily believe that he felt justly indignant on finding that all further hope of promotion was thereby at an end, notwithstanding the efficient services he had already rendered, both to the Pope and to the Church of which he was the head. He might reasonably expect that his previous zeal in the Roman Catholic cause should be accepted as a proof of the groundlessness of the suspicion of his having any serious leanings to the Reformed doctrines. None had served the court of Rome more zealously or effectually, and none had pursued her interests with more politic and persevering assiduity up to that period.

On discovering the exact nature of his position at the court of the Vatican, he withdrew from the cabals and intrigues of that corrupt arena of political strife, and

occupied himself in the duties of his own diocese. There he determined, in his retirement, upon an act which should effectually clear him from the charges of unsoundness and heretical leanings. This was no other than the composition of a work in which he should bring his skill and erudition into play to combat the opinions of the German Reformers, and, by an able and triumphant refutation of their doctrines, at least establish his own orthodoxy beyond question. This work, which he now zealously devoted himself to, was to be published under this title:—"Against the Apostates of Germany."

This is surely evidence enough of the injustice of his accusers. Up to this period, any convictions of the truth which he had entertained must unquestionably have been very partial and imperfect; as imperfect indeed as was his knowledge of the truth. Like many others he proposed to combat doctrines of which he was almost entirely ignorant, and to his surprise, the further he read and studied the arguments of his opponents, the more difficult appeared his self-imposed task. "In the course of writing," says Dr. M'Crie, "and of examining the books of the Reformers, his mind was so struck with the force of the objections which it behoved him to answer, that he threw away the pen and abandoned the work in despair." The intended victor was vanquished, the self-elected champion of Rome yielded to the force of convictions too strong to be withstood.

These months of retirement which the Bishop of Istria spent within his diocese, afforded many seasons of instruction, such as the scholar had never found within the learned cloisters of the University of Padua. "The grace of God," says one of his biographers, "wrought his conversion at this very period, and he saw the false and hollow foundations upon which that fabric rested, which it had been the main business of his life to defend and uphold."

Vergerio had a brother, Giovanni Batista, whom we

have not yet mentioned, but who, though less distinguished than himself, had won high honours as a man of learning, and had been promoted to the bishopric of Pola, in the same district as his brother's diocese of Capo d'Istria. Vergerio now proceeded on a visit to his brother, to whom he unbosomed himself, disclosing the whole mental conflict he had endured, and the unanswerable nature of the arguments by which the doctrines of the Reformation were maintained. "The latter," says the historian of the Church in Italy, "was thrown into great distress by the communication, but on conference with his brother, and hearing the reason of his change of views, especially on the head of justification, he became himself a convert to the Protestant doctrine. The two brothers now concerted a plan for enlightening their dioceses, by conveying instruction to the people on the leading articles of the Gospel, and withdrawing their minds from those ceremonial services and bodily exercises in which they were disposed to place the whole of religion. This they were able to effect in a good degree by means of their own personal labours, and the assistance of some individuals who had previously received the knowledge of the truth; so that before the year 1546 a great part of the inhabitants of that district had embraced the Reformed faith, and made considerable advances in the knowledge of Christian doctrine."

Here again we find another of those striking instances which meet us in the history of nearly every kingdom of Europe prior to the Reformation; showing how often, silent and unnoticed, amid the busy scenes of historic import, the humble seekers after truth have been pursuing their object with generous success. Who that had here only studied the great historical writers of the period, whether treating of civil or ecclesiastical history, would imagine that in the year 1546—the very year in which the noble Anne Askew perished by torture and the stake in

England—nearly the whole inhabitants of two dioceses of the Italian peninsula embraced the doctrines of the Reformation, under the teaching of their own bishops, consecrated and appointed to their high offices by the Pope of Rome, and still und erhis jurisdiction and surveillance? Yet this state of affairs was by no means exclusively limited to these two dioceses. Dr. M'Crie affirms, from various contemporary authorities, that at that very time, "adherents to the reformed opinions were to be found in Genoa, in Verona, in Cittadella, in Cremona, in Brescia, in Civita di Friuli, in Ancona, in various parts of the Roman territories, and *in Rome itself.*" In how many chapters of the history of the Reformation, as of the whole preaching of the Gospel, from the days of the Apostles to our own time, are the striking words of Scripture illustrated:—"The last shall be first, and the first last!" Where are the seven churches of Asia, or all to which the New Testament Epistles were addressed? and even so it seems that the countries that first knew the joyful sound, when the dawn of gospel revival took place at the Reformation, are now lingering in the shadows of a night dark as that which preceded the promised dawn; while other countries, as Scotland and England, which had then scarcely begun the struggle, are now rejoicing in the clear light of truth and Christian liberty. Let us not, however, rejoice in our clearer light with any spirit of boasting. The providence of God, while it permitted the persecutions of Henry the Eighth, and his daughter Mary, in England, wrought out, by means of the very sensuality and lawless passions of the former, a deliverance for the cause of truth, and the adherents of the Reformation Italy, like Spain, knew no refuge from the thraldom of the Inquisition, that blotted out the truth with the blood of its adherents.

CHAPTER V.

THE INQUISITION

It was not to be supposed that such bold and unexpected advocacy of the doctrines of the Reformation as that which we have described within the dioceses of Capo d'Istria and Pola, should be allowed to escape unnoticed. The people indeed heard them gladly, but the monks and priests were up in arms at once to suppress the dreaded innovations which such teaching was calculated to effect. Their complaints were poured in from all quarters to the court of Rome, exciting the utmost alarm at the progress of the new opinions. "At the head of these was Pietro Caraffa, commonly called the Theatine Cardinal, from an order of monks of which he was the founder, a prelate who made high pretensions to sanctity, and distinguished himself by his violence when he afterwards mounted the pontifical throne under the name of Paul the Fourth." An immediate system of opposition was adopted, thoroughly in character with the class of men with whom it originated. The first attack was to be made on all ecclesiastics who had manifested any leanings towards scriptural doctrines, and for this purpose a numerous body of spies and secret familiars of the Inquisition were sent into the suspected districts, to gain access to the houses and to the personal confidence of all who fell under such imputations, and to forward to Rome such discoveries as they could make.

Meanwhile the doctrines of the Reformation were spreading on every side. At Venice a strong movement was exhibited among the people. Ochino, one of the suspected preachers, exercised for a time an important influence by his teaching. But speedy means were

adopted to counteract its effects. "Perceiving," says M'Crie, "that he was surrounded by spies, he exerted a greater circumspection over his words in the pulpit for some time; but having heard that Julio Terentiano, of Milan, a convert of Valdez, with whom he had been intimate at Naples, was thrown into prison, he could no longer restrain himself. In the course of a sermon, at which the senators and principal persons in the city were present, he introduced that subject, and broke out in these words: 'What remains for us to do, my lords? And to what purpose do we fatigue and exhaust ourselves, if those, O noble Venice, queen of the Adriatic, if those who preach to you the truth are to be thrown into prisons, thrust into cells, and loaded with chains and fetters? What place will be left to us? what field will remain open to the truth? Oh that we had liberty to preach the truth! How many blind, who now grope their way in the dark, would be restored to light!' On hearing of this bold appeal, the nuncio instantly suspended him from preaching, and reported the matter to the Pope. But the Venetians were so importunate in his behalf, that the interdict was removed after three days, and he again appeared in the pulpit. Lent being ended, he went to Verona, where he assembled those of his order who were intended for the function of preaching, and commenced reading to them a course of lectures on the Epistles of Paul. But he had not proceeded far in this work when he received a citation from Rome to answer certain charges founded on his lectures, and on the informations of the nuncio at Venice. Having set out on his journey to the capital, he had an interview at Bologna with Cardinal Contarini, then lying on his deathbed, who assured him that he agreed with the Protestants on the article of justification, though he was opposed to them on the other points of controversy. In the month of August, Ochino went to Florence, where he received information that his

death was resolved on at Rome; upon which he retired to Ferrara, and being assisted in his flight by the Duchess Renée, escaped the hands of the armed men who had been dispatched to apprehend him, and reached Geneva in safety."

The escape of Ochino incensed the Pope and his emissaries beyond measure, and led to an increased vigilance and rigour on their part. At the same time Martyr, the Prior of St. Fridiano, at Lucca, had laboured so zealously among the natives of that capital, that it was believed to contain a greater number of converts to the Reformed faith than any city in Italy. He also was compelled to seek safety in flight, in company with three other eminent ecclesiastics, who all succeeded, after encountering many dangers, in reaching Zurich in safety. The zeal of the inquisitors was inflamed by such proceedings to the utmost fury. The holy office was revived with fresh powers. The very same year, 1546, which we have referred to as that of the chief labours of Vergerio and his brother, was signalized in the south of Italy by the establishment of the Inquisition in Naples, by order of the Emperor Charles the Fifth, exactly on the model of the dreadful Spanish tribunal, and expressly for the purpose of extirpating the Lutheran heresy. The establishment of this horrible system may be said to have sealed the fate of that unhappy country. What could faith or truth, or even the heroic constancy of the martyr do to withstand the secret, mysterious, and merciless proceedings of this terrific agent of bigotry? Nothing could contend with it. The persecuted fled from before its awful despotism, and such as effected their escape went to swell the number of faithful adherents of the Church in other lands, where the exiles were welcomed by their brethren in the faith.

The narratives of the dangers and the escape of many of these confessors, abound with very striking traits illustrative of the history of this period. We return, however,

to Vergerio and his brother. Annibale Grisone, a zealous inquisitor, was sent into the district comprehending their dioceses, and spread terror and dismay among the inhabitants. He wrought on the terrors of recent converts by threats of imprisonment and the flames; he excited the wrath of the ruder populace by working on their superstitious fears, persuading them that by the devilish craft of the heretics, or the judgments of God, manifested against them for their defection from the faith, their vines and olives had failed, their cattle had been visited with pestilential diseases, and their whole substance had suffered under this wrathful visitation of Heaven. By such exhortations as these he artfully excited the populace, until, on a chosen occasion, he ascended the pulpit in the Cathedral of Capo d'Istria, on a high festival day, after the celebration of mass, and adopted this popular strain with such effect that he rendered the rabble the obedient tools of his design. "To what," he exclaimed, "are all these evils to be ascribed? To your bishop and the other heretics among you; nor can you expect any alleviation of your distress until they are punished. *Why do you not rise up and stone them?*" Influenced by such exhortations, the ignorant and excited populace were inflamed to madness against the supposed authors of these evils, and Vergerio was compelled to secret himself to escape the blind fury of the populace and the malice of the inquisitors.

Very little information has been preserved regarding the Bishop of Pola; but there is reason for believing, from the ready zeal with which he seconded his brother's efforts, and the enmity with which he was regarded by the inquisitors, that he was even more forward than Pierpaolo Vergerio in these first efforts at disseminating the pure doctrines of scriptural truth among their people. The Inquisition, however, has ready means for silencing such opponents. While Vergerio fled from the fury of the rabble, his brother, Giovanni Batista, appears to have

resided peaceably at his palace, surrounded, it may be, with a more numerous and attached body of adherents, on whose ears the exaggerations and designing falsehoods of the inquisitors fell altogether without effect. In the midst of the confusion, however, he was suddenly found dead in his own palace, under circumstances which excited strong suspicion that poison had been employed to accomplish the work of his removal, when all other indirect means had failed.

Vergerio took refuge for a time at Mantua, under the protection of Cardinal Gonzaga; but he soon received notice that no safety could be hoped for within the influence of the Roman court. Upon this he went to Trent, where the famous Council was sitting, with the intention, it is said, of demanding his seat in the assembly. His arrest was immediately resolved upon by the Pope, but he feared that he might thereby furnish a handle against himself, it being part of the policy of Rome at that period to profess a wish for the attendance of the Protestant divines of Germany, and to represent the Council as a free and unfettered assembly. The trial of the charges against Vergerio was accordingly referred to the Nuncio and Patriarch of Venice, whose proceedings were skilfully met by him in a succession of able and learned defences, which protracted the trial for a period of two years, at the end of which time he was forbidden ever to return to his diocèse.

CHAPTER VI.

SPIRA, THE APOSTATE.

About the period of the final decision of Rome against Vergerio, he withdrew to Padua, where he witnessed the death of Francisco Spira, an eminent lawyer of Padua,

who has acquired the unenviable title of the Apostate. He is described as a man of high talents and extensive learning; and having taken the degree of doctor of laws at that university, he acquired great repute as an advocate in the town of Cittadella, under the jurisdiction of the Venetian state. The following is a succinct account of his conversion and relapse, from the pen of a recent writer:—" Many inquiring minds were now directed towards the examination of doctrines so novel, and which were making such rapid progress; nor was it likely that such a mind as that of Spira would allow the opportunity of investigation placed within his power to remain unimproved. His examination was minute and searching, and the very looseness of the hold which the old religion retained upon his mind, rendered it better adapted for their intellectual reception. He was a careful student of Scripture, and of controversial writers on both sides: the result was a conviction that the tenets of the Reformers were based upon truth, and an entire acquiescence in their peculiar opinions. He farther displayed all the signs of sincere conversion, openly renouncing Romanism and zealously promulgating the Reformed principles. For the space of six years he held in apparent sincerity, and inculcated upon others, the doctrine of free grace. His advocacy had much influence from his high reputation and moral worth, and he was reckoned one of the most formidable supporters of the new heresy; one on whose head the wrath of the offended church might most righteously descend. He was a mark for the bitter rage of the priesthood; false reports were raised to his disadvantage; malicious accusations against him were eagerly propagated amongst the people; and the question was even agitated whether it became not the true sons of the Church to use violent measures to take away the life of this adversary of the faith. In prosecution of this design the clergy instigated Cara, the papal legate at Venice, to take steps against Spira, representing

him as a dangerous Lutheran who was leading multitudes astray. Forthwith the legate applied to the senate, exhorting them to lose no time in adopting measures to cut short his career.

The eyes both of the friends and enemies of the truth were now directed towards Spira, whose deplorable fall was so soon to grieve the former and rejoice the latter. If formerly he had loved the truth, it was with that lukewarm love which vanishes as danger becomes close and formidable. He perceived its excellency so far as to feel pleasure in its propagation; not however to meet destitution, or to brave bodily pain. He had eleven children also, and no parent's heart could be insensible to the consequences which their father's disgrace might entail upon them. His steadfastness was lessened—his mind was agitated with conflicting doubts and fears. He could find no rest; the truth had sunk in his heart to so little depth, that, yielding to the suggestions of Satan, and vanquished by the fear of man, he resolved to return to that apostate church which he had before denounced. This resolution was not adopted without much hesitation, and powerful resistance from better feelings; but the fear of poverty and reproach, of imprisonment and of a painful death, damped his courage, and deadened his heart to the power of another world."

In this wretched state of vacillation between fear and conscience, Spira at length went to Venice and signed a recantation, drawn up by the papal legate, in which he declared his grief for what had passed, and besought pardon for his offences against the Church and the Universal Bishop.

This document afforded unmeasured triumph to the Romanists at a time when their cause seemed to be suffering by many defalcations. They resolved to make the most of it, and Spira was required immediately to proceed to Cittadella, the scene of his previous testimony against the

errors of Rome, and there to testify his repentance in public by indubitable proofs. But Spira had scarcely set out on his journey homeward ere he became a prey to the most vehement remorse. He had openly professed and proclaimed the doctrines of the Reformation among his friends and fellow-citizens, under the conscientious conviction of their truth; he had studied the Scriptures as the Word of God, and become convinced of the utter irreconcilability of its doctrines with those of the Church of Rome; and now he was going voluntarily to renounce all this, and to declare his adherence to the lies which he had abandoned. He looked upon himself as doomed beyond hope to all the awful denunciations of Scripture against apostacy and blasphemy. "In the most agonizing state of mind he reached his native city, and there related to his friends with the deepest shame, what he had done and what he had engaged to do. The intelligence was no doubt astounding to those who had so often listened to his forcible appeals in behalf of the Protestant faith. Their opinion, however, was that he had gone too far to retract. The worldly interests of his family required that he should complete the abjuration which he had made at Venice. Thus, conferring with flesh and blood, Spira was induced to listen to the views of worldly men, in whose eyes the truth of God was a matter of comparative indifference. He accordingly repaired to the magistrate of the place, and acquainted him with his intention to make a public recantation on a certain day. The official was not ignorant of what had happened. The pope's legate had written to him, and forwarded Spira's abjuration, written out and signed with his own hand. The appointed day arrived, and the unhappy man, who had spent the previous night in the greatest anxiety and alarm, entered the chapel, where, at the conclusion of the mass, he repeated the instrument of abjuration word for word, in the presence of an assembly amounting to no fewer than

two thousand persons. What a humiliating spectacle! A man once held in the highest respect for the vigour of his intellect, the uprightness of his moral character, and the ardour of his zeal in the cause of righteousness and truth, now standing forth in a crowded assembly and solemnly declaring himself one of those on whom is pronounced that awful declaration of God's Word, 'whoso putteth his hand to the plough, and looketh back, is not fit for the kingdom of heaven!'

Besides making a recantation of his former views, Spira was fined in thirty pieces of gold, on payment of which, his property, wife, and family, were restored to him. But happiness and peace were beyond the reach of one whose bosom was so disordered; whose conscience, immediately on the perpetration of the deed, had awakened in him agonies of remorse, and had seemed to exclaim in a voice of thunder, 'Impious wretch! you have dissolved the bond of your allegiance, and broken your vow. Depart, apostate, and carry with you the sentence of eternal condemnation.' Overcome by anguish of mind, the miserable Spira fainted away; he soon awoke from the swoon, but only to a renewed and aggravated consciousness of misery and utter desolation. He felt himself an enemy of God; and his mind was almost overwhelmed, for it could dwell on nothing else but the fearful sentence of the judgment-day, which in his case seemed anticipated on earth, and the devouring flames of hell, the lurid light of which seemed ever around him. If ever the apostate has had a bitter foretaste of the endless agonies of a lost spirit, Spira had this foretaste.

His bodily appearance testified the raging fire which burned ever within him. He sunk into a state of melancholy, which some of his friends regarded as insanity. His life seemed in danger, and his medical attendants advised removal to Padua, a celebrated university-seat, where the ablest medical advice could be procured. He

was conducted thither by his family and some friends: three of the most renowned physicians were summoned to a consultation, who, as might have been expected, reported that his was a case beyond the power of medicine,—that his disease was seated in the mind, and that they could only recommend him to look to spiritual consolation for the relief of an overburdened conscience.

So singular a case could not fail to attract public notice in the town and neighbourhood. We are told that great numbers flocked to see him, some doubtless from idle curiosity, others charitably endeavouring to give him consolation. But all arguments fell unheeded upon his ears. He refused comfort, and despaired totally of mercy. He complained of burning thirst, but obstinately refused nourishment, either of a solid or liquid kind. When the question was put to him, what he considered to be the cause of his disease, he detailed the whole circumstances of his apostacy, intermingled with such passionate expressions of contrition, that several of the bystanders wept and trembled. In vain were the promises of God set before him. 'My sin is greater,' he would instantly reply, 'than the mercy of God. I have denied Christ voluntarily, and against my knowledge, and I feel that he hardens me and that he will allow me no hope.' "

We have been the more particular in describing the case of Francesco Spira, as it forms a remarkable contrast to the courage and constancy of most of the Italian Reformers, and undoubtedly exercised a lasting influence on the mind of Vergerio.

The wretched victim of remorse was waited on by the Romish priests, with vain offers of ghostly aid and assurances of peace, while he felt there was no peace for him. He was one day visited by Anthony Fontarrina, the Venetian legate, who had received his abjuration. On entering the room where he lay, his trembling frame and restless blood-shot eye betrayed the fever that was con-

suming him. The instant that his despairing glance rested on the priest, he exclaimed, "O the accursed day! O that I had never been there! would to God I had been dead!" These poor comforters ascribed his terrors to demoniacal agency, and employed a priest to cast the devil out of him. They then urged on him to receive the sacrament of the mass, but he replied by denouncing the unscriptural doctrines of that superstitious rite.

Many learned and pious persons visited his death-bed, and sought to direct him anew to the Saviour whom the Gospel reveals, and the grand doctrine of the Reformation, justification by faith in Him. Amongst these was Vergerio, who spent some time with him; and though his efforts were vain on behalf of the victim of despair, the scene he witnessed was abundantly blessed to himself, encouraging him in his course, and confirming him in the faith he had professed. To this, indeed, has been ascribed his own final determination to abandon all for Christ. "To tell the truth," says he, in describing his feelings on this occasion, "I felt such a flame in my breast that I could scarcely restrain myself at times from going to the chamber door of the legate of Venice, and crying out, 'Here I am: where are your prisons and your fires? satisfy your utmost desire upon me; burn me for the cause of Christ, I beseech you, since I have had an opportunity of comforting the miserable Spira, and of publishing what it was the will of God should be published." Vergerio afterwards wrote a minute and strikingly interesting account of Spira.

The closing scene of the despairing apostate was lightened by no gleam of hope. He admitted the freeness of the Gospel; but he said he had acted the part of Judas, who had "gone to his place," and for him there remained no more room for repentance. His friends resolved on taking him home, says a biographer, from whom we have already quoted in part, "finding that his misery, instead of

diminishing, was increasing at Padua. Preparations for the journey being completed, Spira could scarcely be prevented from putting an end to his own existence. After reaching home he lingered out two months in unmitigated anguish. His body was worn to a skeleton, and he was ever tormented by burning thirst, till his spirit was called to its account. No angel of peace sat by the pillow of the dying; no consoling thoughts sustained his soul; no hope of pardon was experienced by him; no ray of comfort cheered the last awful struggle; he died with the fearful apprehension that as he had rejected Christ, Christ would reject him when summoned to the tribunal of judgment."

CHAPTER VII.

THE PASTOR OF THE GRISONS.

To the south-east of Switzerland, in the higher regions of the Alps, amid the vales that lie sheltered between the clefts of these gigantic mountains, from whence arise the mighty streams of the Rhine and the Inn, lies the country of the Grisons, whither many of the Protestant exiles of Italy withdrew, and found a shelter and ready welcome at the hands of the simple inhabitants. This district had been one of the most degraded under the sway of the Romish priesthood. The corruptions which had overspread the Catholic Church before the Reformation, existed there with all the aggravations incidental to a rude and illiterate people. The grossest vices were openly practised by the clergy, and they availed themselves of the privileges of their situation to be the foremost in licentiousness and crime.

The inhabitants of the Grisons were struck with the

declarations of the Reformers of Switzerland, and the contrast between the teachers of the Reformed Church and their own clergy. They speedily embraced the views of the German and Swiss Reformers, and with one consent embraced the Protestant doctrines, and abolished the mass.

Among these people many of the converted priests of the Italian states were welcomed, as educated pastors sent to supply their need. One of the earliest of these was Bartolommeo Maturo, the predecessor of Vergerio. "He had been prior of a Dominican convent at Cremona," says the historian of the Reformation, "and being disgusted at the lives of the monks and the fictitious miracles by which they deluded the people, he threw off the cowl and left Italy. Having preached the Reformed doctrines in the Valteline, he was accused to the diet which met at Ilantz in 1529, and had sentence of banishment passed against him. But he was taken under the protection of one of the deputies, and conducted to Pregalia, where he commenced preaching with success. From that place he went into the neighbouring district of Engadina, where Gallitz had hitherto gained very little ground on account of the determined hostility of the most powerful inhabitants. The first appearance of Maturo threatened a tumult, but he persevered, and the matter being referred to the suffrages of the community, he obtained a majority in his favour, and preached openly before the eyes of those who in the late diet had voted for his banishment. Returning to Pregalia, he undertook the pastoral charge of Vico Soprano and Stampa, where he continued until 1547, and died a pastor in the valley of Tomliasco.

Soon after Maturo's removal, Vico Soprano obtained for its pastor the celebrated Vergerio. It is true the bishop did not distinguish himself by observing the law of residence, having frequently visited the Valteline, besides the journeys which he undertook into Switzerland and

Germany, during the period in which he held his cure. Some allowance must however be made for the habits of a man who had been accustomed all his life to a change of scene and employments. Besides, he was never idle; and considering the state of the country at that time, he perhaps did more good by his preaching excursions than he could have done by confining himself to a parish. The stateliness of his figure, his eloquence, and the rank which he had lately held in the papal Church, conspired in fixing the eyes of the public upon him; and persons of all classes were anxious to see and hear a man who had repeatedly sustained the office of ambassador from the court of Rome, was supposed to be acquainted with all its secrets, and was not scrupulous about divulging what he knew. In returning from one of his visits to the Valteline he lodged a night in Pontresina, a town situate on the northern base of Mount Bernino. It happened that the parish priest had died that day, and the inhabitants assembled in the evening at the inn to converse with the landlord, who was judge of the village, about choosing a successor. After engaging their attention by conversing on the subject which had called them together, Vergerio asked them if they would not hear a sermon from him. The greater part objecting to this, 'Come,' said the judge, 'let us hear what this new-come Italian will say.' So highly gratified were the people with his sermon that they insisted on his preaching to them again before his departure. Accordingly he did preach next day to a crowded audience on the merits of Christ's death and justification, with such effect that the inhabitants soon after agreed harmoniously in abolishing the mass and giving a call to a Protestant minister. Having preached, during one of his short excursions, in the town of Casauccia, at the foot of Mount Maloggia, all the images in the church of St. Gaudentius were thrown down during the following night; and the same

thing happened after a visit which he paid to Samada. An accusation was brought against him for instigating these disorderly practices, but he was acquitted. His countrymen were no less diligent in planting and watering churches in that part of the country. In general, it appears that the greater part of the important districts of Upper and Lower Engadina, and the whole of Pregalia, a district lying on the southern declivity of the Alps, were reformed by means of the Italian refugees. This took place between 1542 and 1552, and from that time the Protestants became decidedly the majority, comprehending the greater part of the population, as well as the wealth of the republic."

The influence of the converted papal legate became more dreaded by the agents of Rome the longer his labours were continued. His talents had been abundantly acknowledged by the court of the Vatican, while they were employed on its behalf; and they proved still more powerful when his convincing oratory was engaged in the cause of truth, and on behalf of doctrines for which he had abandoned wealth and influence, and the highest honours of the Church. We have already seen that this simple pastor of the Grisons was once on the eve of being created a Cardinal,—of becoming one of the princes of the Church,—and a member of the sacred college, from whose numbers, and by whom the Pontiff is elected,—so that it is no exaggerated statement when we remark that this man of eminent talent and acknowledged services on behalf of the Church of Rome, renounced his chance of the Popedom, that he might obey the voice of conscience, and profess the faith of Christ, which it had been his privilege to find, even while labouring to confound its advocates by his abilities and learning.

Such was the dread which the Romanists entertained of him, that on his paying a visit to the Valteline, in 1553, a deputation waited on the Governor and insisted on the

immediate banishment of the bishop, adding, that if their demand was not complied with, they would not be answerable for the consequences that might ensue. Vergerio understood the meaning of the threat, and voluntarily withdrew from the place; "for," says he, "they meant to oppose me with the dagger, and pistol, and poison."

Of the remainder of the life of this courageous and noble Italian reformer, few incidents have been preserved of striking import, though it is known that he continued to the last to take an active share in all that concerned the interests of the Protestant Church. His pen was diligently employed from time to time, and his name frequently appears, along with others of the leading men to whom the Protestants of Italy looked for guidance and direction. He withdrew at length to Tubingen, in the Duchy of Wirtemberg, to escape the dangers to which he was exposed by the machinations of his enemies, and there he died, on the 4th of October 1565, leaving behind him a name honoured among all who love the truth, and revere the simplicity of that conscientious faith which yields obedience to the commands of duty in defiance of all the influence of interested motives and worldly fear.

POPE JOHN

AND THE

REFORMER OF BOHEMIA.



PRECEDING pages of this volume have been devoted to trace out the history of eminent and noble men, and the records of less noted, but yet, not unfrequently, fully as efficacious labourers in the great cause of truth. The characters whom we have selected as a noble band of pioneers in the work of Reformation, are those whose names and whose deeds have been almost lost sight of in the noise and storm of the battle, and the more popular fame of the great leaders at the hour of victory. Yet their toils and perils were no less

severe, and their victories often no less efficacious in leading to the final result. "I love," says a recent continental writer, "the men who dispute with Time the memory of those whom they revere, like that Puritan of the olden day, whose indefatigable hand restored on the monumental stone the half-defaced inscriptions of his people. That truly was a Christian work performed by the venerated John Fox, who wore out his existence in collecting the acts of the martyrs that perished in the primitive Church, and in the early days of Protestantism; and not without merit may be considered the conduct of the famous Bolandists when they consecrated their lives to the task of seeking out the marvellous deeds of the saints in the Catholic Church. The object of these pious labourers was to arouse the faith, to stimulate men's minds by great examples, and to show in the midst of the struggles carried on against human authority, the irresistible power of divine grace operating in the heart of the Christian." It is with this object in view that we have sought again to present in a fair and full light some of the earlier Reformers whose deeds and sufferings for conscience' sake have been permitted to fall into the shade, while the world dwells on the names of other men who entered into their labours.

There is one, however, whose name can never be forgot in Europe, whom yet we select as the fittest with which to close this series of Reformers who preceded the Reformation. That man is JOHN HUSS. He is one of no sect or party, for he perished in the midst of the storm, when narrow differences are all forgotten. He was the advocate for truth against error; for liberty of conscience against spiritual despotism; and the gratitude of every Christian is due to him who first tore aside the thick curtains that darkened the prison-house, and let in the breaking rays of promised dawn.

In striking contrast to Huss, stands his great opponent

Pope John the Twenty-third, a reformer too, though in a far different sense,—one who made his elevation to the Supreme Pontiff's throne the instrument for his own lawless vices and crimes, until even degraded and superstitious ignorance challenged the truth of a system owning such a head.

The year 1377 is memorable in ecclesiastical history for the return of Pope Gregory the Eleventh from Avignon to the ancient capital of the world, where he died shortly after, oppressed with painful forebodings of the dangers that awaited his successors. "What he had predicted soon took place. Out of sixteen cardinals who were at Rome with Gregory, only four were Italians; amongst the rest were eleven Frenchmen and one Spaniard. Had the choice of the cardinals been free, they would in all probability have elected a French Pope, but the people of Rome were determined to have an Italian. A furious crowd besieged the entrance to the conclave, and uttered menaces of death, crying out, 'Reflect, be wise, Lord Cardinals, and hand us out a Roman Pope, that will remain amongst us; if you do not comply, we will make your skulls redder than your hats.' An Italian was elected, the suffrages having unanimously fallen on the Archbishop of Bari, who assumed the name of Urban the Sixth.

'This prelate,' says Thierry de Niem, who was his secretary, 'before his elevation to the pontifical throne, was a pious, humble, and disinterested man; vigilant and laborious, the enemy of simony and its abettors, fond of the society of learned and upright men, regular in his life, austere in morals, and exceedingly zealous for the proper exercise of justice; but he exhibited to the world a striking and melancholy example of the change which high advancement often produces in the best dispositions. Raised to the highest pinnacle of human greatness, his brain grew dizzy—his heart swelled with pride—and the modest and humble priest became an intractable and ferocious despot.'

He had preserved a praiseworthy zeal for the reformation of the morals of the clergy, but he evinced so rash an eagerness in his attempts to carry out his views, that, in three months after his elevation to the popedom, the very persons that had chosen him protested against his election. The eleven French cardinals and the Spanish one first left Rome, and repairing under different pretexts to Agnani, and from thence to Fondi, addressed to all the powers and universities of Europe the following letter:—

'We have apprised you of the horrible fury, cruel tyranny, and audacious and sacrilegious proceedings of the people of Rome and their governors, against our personal safety and property, when we were engaged in the election of a pope, with a view to force us to choose one according to their phantasy. It is owing to this unbridled wickedness that the see of St. Peter is now occupied by an apostate, who propagates erroneous dogmas, and tramples under foot all truth. He is not our pope by canonical election; for, neither was he impelled by the Holy Ghost to present himself, nor was he fixed on the pontifical throne by unanimous consent—he was placed there by the most barbarous fury on the one hand, and by mortal terror on the other. Wherefore, we are obliged to make a public protest against this intruder, (whom ambition has delivered up to the guidance of his evil imagination,) as we greatly fear that believers may be seduced by his artifices.'

The warning thus given by the cardinals, in order to be useful and meritorious, ought to have been less tardy; the date of their letter and the violence of the style rendered the purity of the motives by which it was dictated doubly suspicious.

The three Italian cardinals had remained with Urban, but their French colleagues planned an unworthy artifice to gain them over. They wrote to each separately, and,

under the seal of profound secrecy, promised him the sovereign pontificate. The temptation was too powerful —the Italians hurried to Fondi, and, with the others, proceeded to a new election. But their expectations were disappointed, for a Frenchman, the Cardinal of Geneva, was elected pope; and, under the name of Clement the Seventh, he took up his residence at Naples."

Such was the commencement of the frightful struggle which shook the kingdoms of Europe, and made the long quiescent and hoary superstitions of the erring Church tremble in anticipation of their fall. It was indeed the hand of Providence working the overthrow of the vastest work that the human mind had ever reared in defiance of the divine law. Now were seen the kingdoms of Europe marshalling opposing banners to support the rival pretenders to infallibility,—England, Germany, Bohemia on one side; Scotland, France, and Spain on the other,—every sovereign weighing his own interests against the claims of the one elect pontiff or the other; and the people, meanwhile,—forced for once to decide for themselves the question as to whom they were to look for spiritual guidance,—becoming prepared to detect the monstrous cheat by which they had been so long deluded.

In the midst of the great contest that followed, first Wycliffe and then Huss appeared, to direct aright the wavering faith. Wycliffe arose in England in the early part of the fourteenth century, and boldly appealed from the Pope to the Word of God. The English Reformer was as the morning star of the Reformation, the year 1360, when he arose, was as the bright daybreak; it was not till 1373 that Huss was born, the teacher of Bohemia, and the example of Europe, whose appearance was as the bright and joyous dawn, the sure harbinger of glorious day.

It is only when we have faithfully and deeply studied the history of Europe prior to that period, and learned to

know the profound ignorance into which it had sunk, that we become able to appreciate the astonishing clearness and boldness with which the Bohemian Reformer deduced and maintained the great truths of the Gospel. "John Huss," says the historian of the later Reformation, "preached in Bohemia a century before Luther preached in Saxony. He seems to have penetrated deeper than his predecessors into the essence of Christian truth. He prayed to Christ for grace to glory only in his cross, and in the inestimable humiliation of his sufferings. But his attacks were directed less against the errors of the Romish Church than the scandalous lives of the clergy. Yet he was, if we may be allowed the expression, the John Baptist of the Reformation. The flames of his pile kindled a fire in the Church that cast a brilliant light into the surrounding darkness, and whose glimmerings were not to be so readily extinguished.

John Huss did more: prophetic words issued from the depths of his dungeon. He foresaw that a real Reformation of the Church was at hand. When driven out of Prague and compelled to wander through the fields of Bohemia, where an immense crowd followed his steps and hung upon his words, he had cried out: 'The wicked have begun by preparing a treacherous snare for the goose. But if even the goose, which is only a domestic bird, a peaceful animal, and whose flight is not very high in the air, has nevertheless broken through their toils. other birds, soaring more boldly towards the sky, will break through them with still greater force. Instead of a feeble goose, the truth will send forth eagles and keen-eyed vultures.' This prediction was fulfilled by the Reformers.

When the venerable priest had been summoned by Sigismund's order before the Council of Constance, and had been thrown into prison, the chapel of Bethlehem, in which he had proclaimed the Gospel and the future

triumphs of Christ, occupied his mind much more than his own defence. One night the holy martyr saw in imagination, from the depths of his dungeon, the pictures of Christ that he had had painted on the walls of his oratory, effaced by the Pope and his bishops. This vision distressed him: but on the next day he saw many painters occupied in restoring these figures in greater numbers and in brighter colours. As soon as their task was ended, the painters, who were surrounded by an immense crowd, exclaimed: 'Now let the popes and bishops come! they shall never efface them more!' And many people rejoiced in Bethlehem, and I with them, adds John Huss. —'Busy yourself with your defence rather than with your dreams,' said his faithful friend, the knight of Chlum, to whom he had communicated this vision. 'I am no dreamer,' replied Huss, 'but I maintain this for certain, that the image of Christ will never be effaced. They have wished to destroy it, but it shall be painted afresh in all hearts by much better preachers than myself. The nation that loves Christ will rejoice at this. And I, awaking from among the dead, and rising, so to speak, from my grave, shall leap with great joy.' "

It is not necessary that we should enter into a minute and circumstantial narrative of the summons of Huss to Rome by the Pontiff, who is described by his own secretary as a monster of avarice, ambition, lewdness, and cruelty,—nor of the Council of Constance, the perfidy of Sigismund, and the strange measure of justice that committed the courageous and meek servant of God to the flames, and remanded the degraded voluptuary to the enjoyment of all but the highest honours and powers of the Church, which he had forfeited by crimes so horrible that they cannot be named. We have minutely detailed the glowing narrative that records the names of less noted labourers in the same cause, for the very reason that their worth has remained untold because of the pre-

eminent services of those of greater note. But they who have been champions of the truth,—who, fighting in the van, have led on the armies of the living God to victory,—the Wycliffe, the Huss, the Luther, the Knox, and the Cranmer,—these are names displayed as beacons and banners to be seen from afar, as standards round which the soldiers of Christ have long rallied when contending in the same noble and glorious cause.

The worth and power of the Reformer was appreciated by his enemies almost before it was known to his friends. When the Emperor Sigismund wavered, Michael Causis, his implacable enemy, exclaimed, "If John Huss were to escape safe from the Council, he would do more injury to the Church than any heretic from the time of Constantine." On the 7th of June 1418, a total eclipse of the sun darkened with its shadow the face of Europe, "with fear perplexing nations." It stayed for some hours the darker proceedings of the Council, who were that morning to assemble for the trial of Huss. It was long after noon when they at length ventured forth with the return of sunshine, and the intrepid Reformer, who had come to Constance relying on the safeguard pledged to him on the word of the Emperor, was led before his judges assembled in the hall of the Franciscans. He entered the assembly loaded with chains, and boldly confronted the perjured Sigismund, who presided on the occasion and quailed before the glance of the prisoner whose liberty he was sworn to maintain.

It is unnecessary to examine in detail the complicated charges of heresy which were brought against the Reformer. Scarcely a show of justice was attempted. "Recantation, or death," was the alternative offered, and the voice of Huss was drowned in this reiterated cry. Yet among the milder of his judges, there were not wanting those who united with the Emperor in striving to procure such a form of abjuration as might prove

acceptable to Huss, and rescue them from the alternative of sanctioning his condemnation; and perhaps the noble firmness of the martyr never shone more brightly, than when he who had stood unquailed before the threats of malignant judges, passed unmoved through the harder ordeal of the entreaties and tears of his friends. Sigismund awaited the result of their final effort with an anxiety that proves how keenly he suffered under the stings of conscience. "John Huss," says a recent German biographer, "by his firmness, forced on the Emperor the violation of his faith, and had a noble revenge, in taking from him the power to rescue him from the funeral pile." Sigismund was now taught by bitter experience, that a sceptre which has been long swayed by the councils of the hierarchy, is not only gradually wrested from the hands of the rightful owner, but is turned into the means of his own punishment. Importuned by priests of all orders, he at length exclaimed, in bitterness, "Let him die then!" and when still further pressed, he even fixed the day for Huss's execution.

While Huss was thus abandoned to the cruelty of his enemies, he still enjoyed the warm sympathy of numerous friends, whose active exertions on his behalf were carried on at the risk of danger and death to themselves. De Chlum and other Bohemian nobles had hastened to the presence of the Emperor, and besought him to regard his own honour and preserve the intrepid Reformer from the machinations of his enemies. The most they could obtain, was liberty to visit him in his prison, but even there they were denied the freedom of private intercourse, which his position rendered so peculiarly necessary. He was found in so wretched and emaciated a state, from the rigour of his imprisonment, that the hardy Bohemian barons were melted to tears at the sight. Even his opponents were moved to admiration by his noble firmness. The Cardinal Bishop of Ostia, who had at first regarded

him with horror as an obstinate heretic, visited him in prison, and besought him with tears to adopt such a form of recantation as might still enable his friends to secure his liberation. Huss was deeply moved at such unexpected kindness, and pressed his hand to his heart as he declared,—"I cannot deny the truth." But still more generous and self-sacrificing was the friendship of Jerome of Prague, who, on learning of the sufferings of Huss, set out for Constance, regardless of the dangers he incurred. He was immediately arrested and cast into a dark and loathsome dungeon, loaded with heavy irons, and subjected to such dreadful cruelties as brought him to the very point of death.

It was not, however, the policy of the persecutors who had assembled at Constance, as the Fathers of the Church, to allow death to snatch from them their destined victims. With what they considered even-handed justice, they adjudged these faithful confessors to endure the agonies of death by fire, while they remained in session until they had marshalled against the pontiff, John Twenty-third, the catalogue of his enormous crimes, and compelled the abject and convicted priest to yield into their hands the sceptre of spiritual tyranny. The Pope had been preeminent for his cruelty, pride, and intolerance. He was no less distinguished for cowardly and contemptible weakness, when he at length found he had to deal with a stronger power. In tears, and with abject prostrations, he humbled himself before his judges. It was indeed a strange and memorable scene, which the world was to witness in his person. The Sovereign Pontiff was dethroned, his solemn deposition was pronounced, his seal broken, and his armorial bearings defaced. The infallibility of the pretended successors of St. Peter was at an end: it had been weighed and found wanting in the person of Pope John.

Huss too was degraded and condemned by the same tribunal. He was brought from prison loaded with fetters.

Thirty-nine articles of accusation were produced against him, which he was denied even the liberty of protesting to be false. He could only kneel in that assembly of his enemies, and commend his cause to Him to whom the secrets of all hearts are known. When he was at length allowed to address the assembly, he closed his speech with these words, which acquired a thrilling interest from the circumstances that accompanied them. "I determined of my own free will to appear before this Council, under the public protection and faith of the Emperor here present." The prisoner, as he pronounced these words, looked steadfastly at the Emperor Sigismund, and a deep blush mounted to his brow. The remembrance of that look of shame still lives with the people of Germany, and the courage of the dying Huss may be said to have saved his great follower, Luther, from a like fate. When the latter appeared at the Diet of Worms, his enemies urged on the Emperor, Charles the Fifth, to have him seized, in contempt of his safe conduct. "No," exclaimed the Emperor, "I should not like to blush like Sigismund!"

Huss was degraded with like significant forms as those that marked the fall of the Sovereign Pontiff. Clothed in his habits as a Romish priest, and with the sacred chalice in his hand, he was admonished to retract, and on his refusal, he was stripped of those insignia of sacerdotal power, and devoted by the anathemas of his judges to perdition. Here, however, all parallel between the licentious pontiff and the humble confessor fails. Huss was led forth immediately to the stake. He was delayed only to witness the burning of his books, and then being bound with cords, and the pile of faggots heaped around him, fire was set to the wood, and the gathering smoke and flame stifled the song of praise with which he closed his earthly teaching to the world. His habits were burned with him,—large bribes being paid to recover a portion of his dress, and commit it to the flames; and then, in their vain malice,

the persecutors gathered together his ashes, and cast them into the Rhine, a fit and noble sepulchre for the martyr of truth. Far different was the fate of the infamous criminal who had at length been baffled by his opponents.

The new Pope, Martin the Fifth, again elevated his degraded predecessor to his former rank as one of the princes of the Church. With the cardinalship he received patronage, wealth, and honours, and thus the world which had watched this assembly of the Fathers of the Church with such anxious expectation, was left to admire the justice and wisdom of the infallible tribunal, that had convicted its victim—blameless in life, and eminent for learning and piety—of the daring presumption of studying the Word of God, and seeking to make its precepts the rule of his life; while the other, accused of deeds too horrible to name, and convicted even by his own confession of nearly every crime that can pollute the human soul, was remanded to the highest dignities of the Church, and her most sacred and responsible offices, and anew armed for following out the course of lust and blood he had before pursued, by all the wealth and honours she could bestow.

It was, however, only the clouds that precede the dawn. Pope John by his vices eminently assisted in the overthrow of Popery. The Council of Constance even by its noble victims wrought out the purposes of Providence, and mightily aided in urging on the glorious Reformation whose fruits it is now our inestimable privilege to enjoy.